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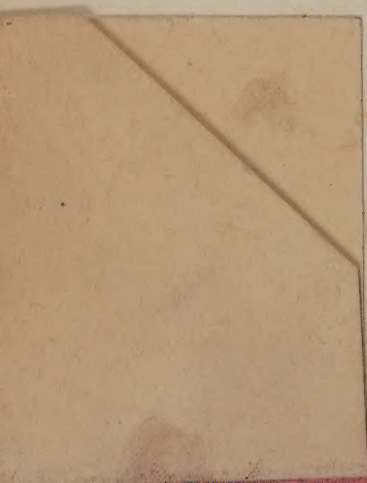

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THE HERO'S DEEDS AND HARD-WON FAME SHALL LIVE.

DANIEL O'CONNELL

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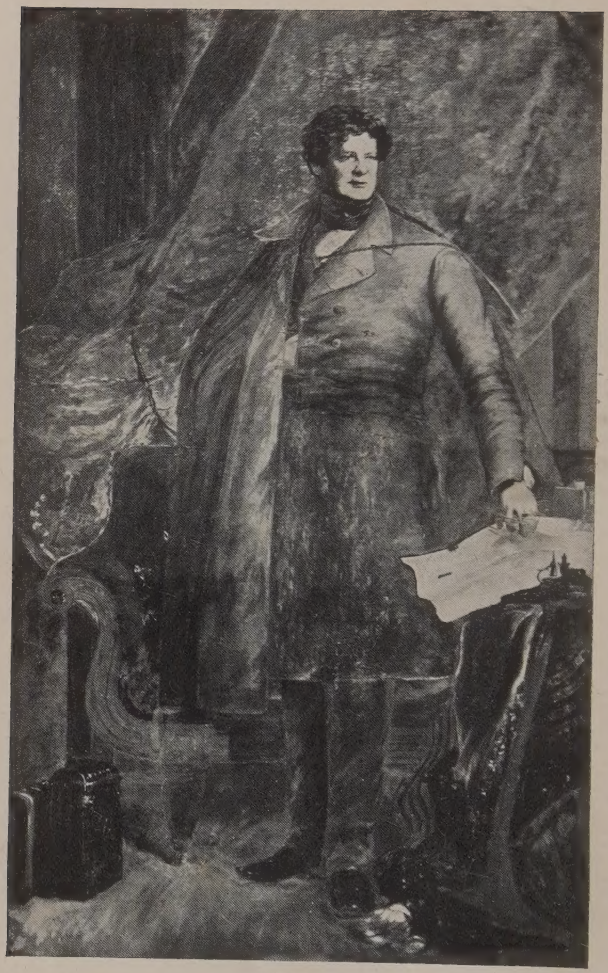

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

FROM THE PAINTING BY DAVID WILKIE.

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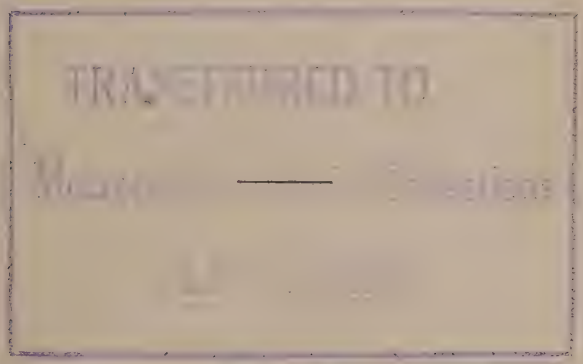
DANIEL O'CONNELL

AND THE REVIVAL OF NATIONAL LIFE IN IRELAND

BY

ROBERT DUNLOP, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "A LIFE OF HENRY GRATTAN," ETC.



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PREFACE.

THIS little volume is not offered to the public as a mere verbal expansion of the article which I contributed a few years ago to the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The conditions of its production have allowed of freer treatment than was possible or even desirable in the former instance. At the same time I have endeavoured to maintain the attitude of impartiality which, I trust, marked the earlier essay. My view throughout has remained unchanged. The ashes of the controversy that raged about O'Connell during his lifetime are still hot in the path of his biographer. Perhaps even yet the time has hardly come when it is possible to judge him in his true proportions. Years of study devoted to Irish history and a warm attachment to the land of my literary adoption will, I hope, plead for me with those who regard it as a presumption for anyone save an Irishman to offer an opinion on a subject peculiarly Irish. Fortunate in possessing dear friends in both camps, and knowing that however divided they are in politics they are united in a common love of their common country, I shall account myself doubly fortunate if the sketch I have here attempted of perhaps the

most illustrious of their countrymen tends in any —even the slightest—degree to lessen the grounds of difference and to strengthen the bonds of union between them. Having no other cause to serve but that of truth, I have concealed nothing and set nothing down in malice. For O'Connell my admiration has increased the more attentively I have studied his life; and though I am well aware that the result has fallen far short of the modest ideal I set before me, I have tried to console myself with the reflection of a generous critic, who was wont to remark that, "nullum esse librum tam malum ut non aliqua parte prodesset."

R. D.

October 28, 1899.

O'CONNELL COAT-OF-ARMS.

HENRY GRATTAN.

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY GODLEY, IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

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DANIEL O'CONNELL.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AND MARRIAGE.

1775–1802.

REVOLUTION has succeeded revolution in Ireland and one set of proprietors another. But despite the frequent changes through which the country has passed—the plantations, transplantations and worst of all the confiscations under the penal code—the O'Connells have never entirely lost foothold in that wild and mountainous strip of land that stretches out storm-lashed into the Atlantic between Dingle Bay and the river of Kenmare, of which they were at one time the lords and masters. "We have peace in these glens," said old Maurice O'Connell to Charles Smith, the antiquarian, when he was soliciting information for his history of Kerry,

"and amid this seclusion enjoy a respite from persecution, where we can still profess the beloved faith of our

fathers. But if you make mention of me and mine, these seaside solitudes will no longer yield us an asylum. The Sassanagh will scale the mountains of Darrynane and we too shall be driven out upon the world without a home."

But the O'Connells were a shrewd race withal, knowing when to bend to the inevitable, when also to turn their opportunities to best advantage; and perhaps they owed their immunity from invasion as much to their political insignificance and the prudent alliances they contracted with their English neighbours as to the solitariness of their glens.

Carhen House, the birthplace of the Liberator, has long ago disappeared, and the little village of Cahirciveen, which now the railway renders easily accessible, has since acquired a new importance from its proximity to the cable-station on Valentia Island. But the sea with all its changing moods of calm and storm, of ebb and flow, and the mountains on which the mists gather or which wind-cleared reflect in purple radiance the glory of the western sun abide the same. In all essential features the place remains unchanged from the day when as a boy O'Connell paddled on the silvery sands of Darrynane Bay, or as a busy barrister snatching a brief holiday from his professional duties hunted the hare on foot and made the hills resound with shout and laughter, or as a wearied politician, seeking rest and health amid his native vales, watched with saddened eyes the waves as they curled and broke on that rock-bound coast. The wild beauty of the place early impressed itself on O'Connell's sensitive nature,

CARHEN HOUSE, CAHIRCIVEEN.

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and recollections of his mountain home added an intensity to his love of his native land, which neither time nor the excitement of a public life ever dulled. Quoting Landor's lines from *Gebir* on the sea-shell—

> "Shake one, and it awakens : then apply
> Its polisht lips to your attentive ear,
> And it remembers its august abodes,
> And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there."

he wrote to the poet in 1838 :

"Would that I had you here, to show you 'their august abode' in its most awful beauty. I could show you at noontide—when the stern south-western had blown long and rudely—the mountain waves coming in from the illimitable ocean in majestic succession, expanding their gigantic force, and throwing up stupendous masses of foam, against the more gigantic and more stupendous mountain cliffs that fence not only this my native spot, but form that eternal barrier which prevents the wild Atlantic from submerging the cultivated plains and high steepled villages of proud Britain herself. Or, were you with me amidst the Alpine scenery that surrounds my humble abode, listening to the eternal roar of the mountain torrent, as it bounds through the rocky defiles of my native glens, I would venture to tell you how I was born within the sound of the everlasting wave, and how my dreamy boyhood dwelt upon *imaginary* intercourse with those who are dead of yore, and fed its fond fancies upon the ancient and long-faded glories of that land which preserved literature and Christianity when the rest of now civilised Europe was shrouded in the darkness of godless ignorance. Yes! my expanding spirit, delighted in these day dreams, till catching from them

an enthusiasm which no disappointment can embitter, nor accumulating years diminish, I formed the high resolve to leave my native land better after my death than I found her at my birth, and, if possible, to make her what she ought to be—

'Great, glorious and free,
First flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea.'

"Perhaps, if I could show you the calm and exquisite beauty of these capacious bays and mountain promontories softened in the pale moonlight which shines this lovely evening, till all which during the day was grand and terrific has become calm and serene in the silent tranquillity of the clear night—perhaps you would readily admit that the man who has been so often called a ferocious demagogue, is, in truth, a gentle lover of Nature, an enthusiast of all her beauties—

'Fond of each gentle and each dreary scene,'

and catching from the loveliness as well as the dreariness of the ocean, and Alpine scenes with which he is surrounded, a greater ardour to promote the good of man, in his overwhelming admiration of the mighty works of God."

The eldest son of Morgan O'Connell and Catherine, daughter of John O'Mullane of Whitechurch, county Cork, Daniel O'Connell was born at Carhen House on 6th August, 1775; being, with the exception of his uncle, Count Daniel O'Connell, the first of his house destined to make a name for himself in history and to extend the reputation of a hitherto undistinguished and insignificant Irish clan into the farthest corners of the earth. His birth coincided almost with the declaration of American independ-

ence and with the first relaxation of those penal laws, through the operation of which, extended over three-quarters of a century, the Irish Roman Catholics, and in them the bulk of the nation, had been reduced to a state of physical, political, and moral serfdom almost without parallel in Europe. This first act of justice towards their own countrymen had been followed by a determined effort on the part of the Irish Protestants—the descendants of successive generations of English settlers—to reassert the legislative independence of their own parliament and rebut the claim of the British legislature to enact laws binding on Ireland. O'Connell was too young to remember the great volunteer movement and the intense wave of patriotism that passed over the country, reaching even to the Catholics, whose sympathy, if obliged to restrict itself to their purses, was on that account none the less sincere or efficient. When Grattan won his memorable but fruitless victory O'Connell was barely seven years old, and it is small wonder if in recalling his earliest impressions the statesman's figure should have loomed less largely in his imagination than that of the redoubtable buccaneer, Paul Jones, whose appearance off the coast of Kerry struck terror into the peasants of the district.

Like many great men O'Connell loved to attribute his success in life to the influence of his mother, and it was indeed to her—a pious, sensible, and affectionate woman as she seems to have been—and to David Mahony, an old hedge-schoolmaster—one of those curious products of the penal code, whose avocation

it was, seated behind some dyke or hedge out of the way of informers, to teach his pupils "feloniously to learn"—that he owed the first rudiments of his education. At an early age, however, he had the good fortune to be adopted by his uncle, Maurice of Darrynane, the head of the family, a childless and somewhat eccentric, but withal prudent old gentleman, familiarly known in the neighbourhood as "Old Hunting Cap"; and it was at Darrynane that the happiest days of his childhood were passed. Of books he had small store. His favourite was Captain Cook's *Voyages* ("the first *big* book I ever read and I read it with intense avidity"); but it was in ballads that he chiefly delighted, and no time could ever efface the impression or even entirely the words of a ballad he once heard sung by a man and woman in the streets of Tralee when he was only twelve years old—

"I leaned my back against an oak,
I thought it was a trusty tree,
But first it bent; and then it broke—
'Twas thus my love deserted me!"

Diffidence was never, perhaps, one of O'Connell's weak points, but it may be suspected that the precocious announcement of his intention to rival Flood and Grattan in "making a stir in the world also," during a discussion at his uncle's table on the relative merits of those two orators, owes its point to the pardonable exaggeration of a friendly afterthought. Anyhow his career at Father Harrington's school at Cove, now Queenstown (said to have been the first school opened in Ireland by a Catholic priest, subse-

quent to the relaxation of the penal laws), whither he was sent at the age of thirteen, hardly leads us to suppose that the natural exuberance of his boyhood was greatly damped by the thought of any such high resolve, and for himself he seems to have been quite satisfied with having achieved the unique distinction of being the only boy in the school who had never been flogged. "This," he used to say, "I owed to my attention."

As a Roman Catholic, Trinity College was, of course, closed to him, but thanks to the liberality of his uncle, "Old Hunting Cap," after spending three years at Harrington's school, he and his younger brother, Maurice, were, as had long been the custom among the wealthier Catholics, sent to complete their education abroad. Proving, however, too old for admission into the school of Liége —their original destination—they entered the English College of St. Omer in January, 1791. Here they remained for some eighteen months, and in an old writing desk, which still occupies its original niche at Darrynane, may yet be found a number of letters from the two boys to their uncle: not very clever nor very amusing—those of Daniel, at any rate, relating for the most part to his studies, and practical details of expenses incurred—but full of gratitude, and inquisitive of news from home. From the Principal of the College, however, Dr. Gregory Stapleton, old Maurice had the satisfaction of learning that his nephews were doing well; and if the younger was hardly as industrious as he might have been, Daniel at any rate was destined to make a

remarkable figure in society. In August, 1792, the brothers were transferred to the college at Douay, where for a *pension* of twenty-five guineas a year "we get very small portions at dinner; most of the lads getting what they call *seconds*, that is, a second portion every day, and for them they pay £3 or £4 a year extraordinary. We would be much obliged to you for leave to get them, but this as you please." Notwithstanding this and other drawbacks, such as having to pay for their own washing, Douay was "in every respect," Daniel thought, better than St. Omer. But the lessons in philosophy, from which he had expected to derive so much profit, were shortly interrupted by the progress of the French Revolution, and in obedience to his uncle's orders he and Maurice quitted Douay in January of the following year. Forced for safety's sake to wear the tricolour cockade, but loathing himself for so doing, Daniel no sooner found himself on board the Dover packet than he tore it from his hat and flung it into the sea. How intense, then, must have been his disgust to hear one of his fellow-passengers, a countryman of his own to boot, one John Sheares by name, destined himself a few years later to a traitor's death for his share in the Rebellion of '98, gloating over the details of the execution, which he had witnessed, of the unfortunate Louis XVI! For such brutalities O'Connell had no taste. His personal experience of the conduct of the revolutionists, especially towards the religious orders, always coloured his estimate of the French Revolution, and it is small wonder that, on returning to England, he

should have declared himself to be at heart almost a Tory. Referring to the subject in maturer years he said: "The French Revolution produced some good, but it was not without alloy: it was mingled with much impiety. Liberty and religion were first separated. The experiment was a bad one. It had much of French levity in it, and a deal of what was much worse."

In the hurry of the flight from Douay O'Connell had left nearly all his wearing apparel behind him, and his first business on reaching London was to replenish his wardrobe. This done he went to board for a time with a Mr. Fagan, a relative apparently of the family, who earned a scanty livelihood by keeping a small private school in or near London. From him he acquired the elements of logic; but the expenses of his establishment proving too great for Mr. Fagan's straitened resources, owing to the war and consequent rise in prices, O'Connell was before long compelled to shift his quarters. After keeping one term at Gray's Inn he was on 30th January, 1794, admitted a student of Lincoln's, and took lodgings with a Mr. Tracy in a court off Coventry Street. Many years afterwards, happening to be pointing out the place to his friend, O'Neil Daunt, his attention was attracted to a fishmonger's shop. "That shop," said he, "is in precisely the same state in which I remember it when I was at Gray's Inn, nearly fifty years ago—the same sized windows, the same frontage, and I believe the same fish!" Subsequently for the sake of greater quietness and the facilities it afforded him for boating he removed out

to Chiswick, where he made the acquaintance, which ripened into a life-long friendship, of a young Irishman of good family connections and fortune, Richard Newton Bennett, who afterwards became a colonial chief-justice.

In the summer of 1795 he paid a visit to Ireland. "I remember," he said, contrasting the rapid modes of travelling in his later years with the slow and inconvenient methods of his youth,—

"I remember when I left Darrynane for London in 1795, my first day's journey was to Carhen, my second to Killorglin, my third to Tralee, my fourth to Limerick, two days thence to Dublin. I sailed from Dublin in the evening; my passage to Holyhead was performed in twenty-four hours; from Holyhead to Chester took six and thirty hours; from Chester to London three days."

Meantime he studied diligently, his reading, outside the usual law-books—Espinasse's *Nisi Prius*, Blackstone's *Commentaries* and Coke *On Littleton*—being confined chiefly to the Bible and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. For the rest, as he wrote to his uncle, he had

"Two objects to pursue—the one, the attainment of knowledge: the other, the acquisition of all those qualities which constitute the polite gentleman. . . . And as for the motives of ambition which you suggest, I assure you that no man can possess more of it than I do. I have, indeed, a glowing and—if I may use the expression—an enthusiastic ambition, which converts every toil into a pleasure, and every study into an amusement. Though nature may have given me subordinate talents,

I never will be satisfied with a subordinate situation in my profession. No man is able, I am aware, to supply the total deficiency of abilities, but everybody is capable of improving and enlarging a stock, however small, and in its beginning contemptible. It is this reflection affords me most consolation. If I do not rise at the Bar, I will not have to meet the reproaches of my own conscience."

In November, 1796, having completed his terms, he returned to Ireland, and pending his call some eighteen months later to the Bar, went into lodgings at 14 Trinity Place, Dublin.

It was a critical moment in the history of his country; for the recognition of the legislative independence of the Irish parliament, which the threat of armed resistance had extorted from England in 1782, had proved a delusive victory, and what the eloquence of Grattan, backed by the swords of the volunteers, had achieved the influence of bribery and corruption had undone. The one chance of safety that had offered itself, in the opportunity given to parliament in 1784 to consent to its own reform and thus to render itself independent of administration, had been neglected, and after fourteen years' experiment the country found itself more at the mercy of the English minister than it had been in the days that preceded the agitation for independence. The desperate attempt of Earl Fitzwilliam in 1795 to give effect to the demands of the patriotic party, and at the eleventh hour, as it were, to rescue the constitution from the parliament that was betraying it, had ended in failure, and with the arrival

of Earl Camden the country drifted rapidly in the direction of rebellion.

O'Connell's return to Ireland was almost coincident with the arrival of Lord Camden and the departure of Theobald Wolfe Tone from America on his mission to France. But in political questions he had at this time only the faintest interest. It is true he was induced by his friend Bennett to enroll himself as a United Irishman; but the insight he thus obtained into the workings of the conspiracy served only to teach him "to have no secrets in politics." Of the leaders of the movement he always spoke contemptuously and perhaps a little unjustly. In the diary which he kept at this time is the following significant note under date, 29 December, 1796—

"The French Fleet is arrived in Bantry Bay. . . . The Irish are not yet sufficiently enlightened to bear the sun of Freedom. Freedom would soon dwindle into licentiousness: they would rob, they would murder. . . . The liberty which I look for is that which would increase the happiness of mankind."

For his own part, having at the time no other object than haply to become a great and successful lawyer, he occupied himself chiefly in preparing for his call to the Bar, which took place on 19th May, 1798, three days only before that on which the Rebellion broke out. He had recently joined the Lawyers' Yeomanry Corps; but thinking, after the rising took place, that it would be prudent, owing to his connection, albeit of the slightest, with the revolutionary

movement, to retire from Dublin till the storm had blown over, he took his passage in a potato-boat bound for Courtmacsherry, and after a capital trip of thirty-six hours found himself safely ashore at Cork. In Kerry only the faintest reverberations were heard of the storm that was devastating Wicklow and Wexford and spreading consternation to the very heart of Dublin, and for O'Connell the summer would have passed away pleasantly enough had he not, in his enthusiasm for hare-hunting, heedlessly exposed himself for several hours to a heavy, drenching rain, in consequence of which he contracted a violent fever, which brought him almost to death's door.

On his recovery, he joined the Munster circuit in the following year, being one of the first to profit by the Relief Act of 1793 and the removal of the disabilities placed by the penal laws on Catholics practising at the Bar. Recalling the circumstances for Daunt's benefit, he said:

"It was at four o'clock on a fine sunny morning that I left Carhen, on horseback. My brother John came part of the way with me; and oh, how I *did* envy him when he turned off the road to hunt among the mountains, whilst *I* had to enter on the drudgery of my profession. But we parted. I looked after him, from time to time, until he was out of sight, and then I cheered up my spirits as well as I could. I had left home at such an early hour that I was in Tralee at half-past twelve. I got my horse fed, and thinking it was as well to push on, I remounted him, and took the road to Tarbert by Listowell. A few miles further on, a shower of rain drove

me under a bridge for shelter. While I stayed there, the rain sent Robert Hickson also under the bridge. He saluted me, and asked me where I was going. I answered, 'To Tarbert.' 'Why so late?' said Hickson. 'I am not late,' said I; 'I have been up since four o'clock this morning.' 'Why, where do you come from?' 'From Carhen.' Hickson looked astonished, for the distance was nearly fifty Irish miles. But he expressed his warm approval of my activity. 'You 'll do, young gentleman,' said he; 'I see you 'll do.' I then rode on, and got to Tarbert about five in the afternoon—fully sixty miles, Irish, from Carhen. There was n't one book to be had at the inn—I had no acquaintance in the town; and I felt my spirits low enough at the prospect of a long, stupid evening. But I was relieved by the sudden appearance of Ralph Marshall, an old friend of mine, who came to the inn to dress for a ball that took place in Tarbert that night. He asked me to accompany him to the ball. 'Why,' said I, 'I have ridden sixty miles.' 'Oh, you don't seem in the least tired,' said he, 'so come along.' Accordingly I went, and sat up until two o'clock in the morning, dancing. I arose next day at half-past eight, and rode to the Limerick assizes. At the Tralee assizes of the same circuit James Connor gave me a brief. There was one of the witnesses of the other party whose cross-examination was thrown upon me by the opposite counsel. I did not do as I have seen fifty young counsels do; namely, hand the cross-examination over to my senior. I thought it due to myself to attempt it, hit or miss! and I cross-examined him right well. I remember he stated that he had *his share* of a pint of whiskey; whereupon I asked him *whether his share was not all except the pewter?* He confessed that it was; and the

THE COURT HOUSE, TRALEE.

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oddity of my putting the question was very successful, and created a general and hearty laugh. Jerry Keller repeated the encouragement Robert Hickson had already bestowed upon my activity, in the very same words—'You 'll do, young gentleman, you 'll do.'"

Though the Relief Act of 1793 had opened the legal profession to the Roman Catholics, the inner Bar, with its emoluments and high offices, still and for some time even after emancipation had been won continued to be jealously preserved by the Protestant ascendancy for itself. But of O'Connell's success even in the limited sphere permitted him there was from the first no question. His fee-book, still extant, shows an income of £60 for the first year, rising to £420.17.6 in the second, to £1077.4.3 in 1806, and to £3,808.7.0 in 1814. In 1828 his emoluments exceeded £8000, and that too though he lost one term.

Nevertheless it is hardly to be wondered at if, in the consciousness of possessing abilities which would have raised him to the highest position in his profession, he should sometimes have allowed himself to treat the occupants of the judicial bench with a degree of contempt bordering at times on insolence. And regrettable though these outbursts of temper may seem to us, it is absurd to apologise for them as inexcusable. For, with a Norbury, who combined the ferocity of a hangman with the jocularity of a buffoon, representing the majesty and impartiality of the law; with a Saurin, whose attitude towards the Catholics seemed constantly to be coloured by a vindictive recollection of the revocation

of the edict of Nantes, as attorney-general; and with a Bench adorned by a Day, of whom Curran remarked that his efforts to understand a point of law resembled an attempt to open an oyster with a rolling-pin; by a Boyd, whose excessive fondness for brandy led to his invention of a curiously-shaped ink-pot out of which, with the help of a hollow quill, he contrived to slake his thirst in court without greatly compromising his dignity; and by a Lefroy, whose misfortune it was to have mistaken the bench for a Calvinistic pulpit—with such examples before him worse lapses than ever he was guilty of might surely have been deemed pardonable.

Besides, it must not be forgotten that O'Connell, lawyer though he was, had small respect for the mummeries of the law, and laughed heartily at the legal virtues of horse-hair wigs. Doubtless the laugh was full of bitterness. For he could not forget that he was an Irishman, and that the honours open to the descendant of a French Huguenot were inaccessible to him—a Catholic and a native. But at least his countrymen should be taught by his example to throw off their old habits of servility, and taking courage from him learn to stand erect like men. Nor was the lesson wholly in vain, deeply though the iron of oppression had entered into their souls, and years after the triumphs of the courts had yielded to those greater ones of the House of Commons, the title of *Counsellor* ever remained his favourite appellation with the Irish peasantry. How indeed should it have been otherwise? Emancipation and Repeal—these were things which touched his imagination,

but hardly interested the Irish peasant in a practical way. It was different when, standing in the dock, feeling the meshes of the law tightening around him, and hope itself expiring in his breast, to see the *Counsellor* enter the court and almost with a word restore him to liberty. This not only touched his imagination but won his gratitude, and whatever the Irish peasant is, he is neither dull nor ungrateful.

That no one whose legal acquirements were not of the highest order could ever have ventured to address the bench as O'Connell sometimes did may be taken for granted. Cleverness and self-conceit are as useful qualities in a lawyer as in another; but mere cleverness and self-conceit would never have raised O'Connell to the position he held at the Bar or have enabled him to hold his own with a Norbury and a Johnson. And it is all the more necessary to insist on this point as the idea is not yet extinct that O'Connell was more demagogue than lawyer, and that he owed his success more to his assurance and rough wit than to any solid knowledge of law he possessed. It is true that in the serener atmosphere of modern times no judge would tolerate the language in which O'Connell occasionally addressed the court. But the Ireland of to-day is not the Ireland of the beginning of the century, and in nothing is the change more perceptible than in the administration of justice. The spirit of intolerance is perhaps not yet quite extinct; but at least there is greater decorum, and such an anomaly as a Norbury or a Saurin is happily no longer possible.

His first circuit over, O'Connell returned to Dublin to find the whole town in a state of intense excitement in regard to the projected legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland. Like his brethren of the Bar generally, who saw in the measure the probable decadence of Dublin and the consequent diminution of their own importance and fees, he was naturally strongly opposed to it on professional grounds. But as the agitation grew, his opposition assumed a political complexion. On 13th January, 1800, he attended a meeting in the Royal Exchange, convened by a number of influential Roman Catholics for the purpose of protesting against the insinuation that the Union was favourably regarded by them. Being induced to speak, he opened his mind freely on the subject. It was the first time he had addressed a public gathering; but the diffidence with which he began soon wore off before the approving cheers of his audience. Were the alternative offered him, he exclaimed, of union or the re-enactment of the penal code in all its rigour, he would without hesitation prefer the latter as the lesser and more sufferable evil, trusting to the justice of his brethren, the Protestants of Ireland, who had already liberated him rather than lay his country at the feet of foreigners. To this opinion he continued faithful through life. It is the key-note of his whole political creed—union amongst Irishmen of every religious and political persuasion for national objects —an Irishman first and then only a Roman Catholic. "It is a curious thing enough," he afterwards remarked to O'Neil Daunt, "that all the principles of

my subsequent political life are contained in my very first speech."

His interference in politics, however, offended his uncle, who, with the timidity natural to one who had been brought up under the demoralising influence of the penal laws, was apprehensive lest active opposition to government might damage his professional prospects. Nor indeed was he far wrong. At any time, from the very beginning almost of his career, O'Connell could, had he been so minded, have purchased advancement and office by the surrender of his political principles. That he did not do so, may be set in the balance against the taunts afterwards levelled at him of living on the bounty of his countrymen. Never indeed was sarcasm more pointless, and those who sneered at the "big beggarman" forgot that the national tribute reflected as much honour on the recipient as it did on the givers of it. Apart, however, from the question of the Union there is no reason to suppose that at this time O'Connell took any particular interest in politics. But the Union exercised a profound effect upon him. It was the Union, he always declared, that first stirred him up to come forward in politics. "I was," he said, "maddened when I heard the bells of St. Patrick's ringing out a joyful peal for Ireland's degradation, as if it was a glorious national festival. My blood boiled, and I vowed, on that morning, that the foul dishonour should not last, if I could ever put an end to it."

Between his first and second appearance on a public platform five years elapsed—five years of honourable progress in his profession, of mental growth

and domestic felicity. At what time he fell in love with his cousin, Mary O'Connell, we do not know; but if his practice was regulated by the advice he once gave to a friend of his never to offer marriage at an early stage in his courtship, the affair, we may conjecture, was probably of some years' standing. Mary O'Connell was the daughter of Dr. O'Connell of Tralee, a gentleman much esteemed for his professional ability, but of pecuniary resources too limited to provide his daughter with a dower. The match displeased O'Connell's family, particularly his uncle Maurice, who, in fact, had already singled out a suitable partner for him in the person of Miss Mary Ann Healy, a mature spinster of short stature, but remarkably long purse and—nose. Indeed, so seriously did her personal appearance threaten to damage her matrimonial prospects, that in making his will, her father thought it only right to increase her portion expressly "on account of her nose." But neither Miss Healy's attractions, nor the fear of being disinherited by his uncle, was sufficient to move O'Connell from his purpose.

"I never," he said, "proposed marriage to any woman but one—my Mary. I said to her, 'Are you engaged, Miss O'Connell?'—she answered 'I am not'; 'then,' said I, 'will you engage yourself to me?' 'I will,' was her reply. And I said I would devote my life to make her happy. She deserved that I should: she gave me thirty-four years of the purest happiness that man ever enjoyed."

The marriage was privately celebrated at the lodgings of the bride's brother-in-law, James Connor, in

Dame Street, Dublin, on 23rd June, 1802, and shortly afterwards O'Connell took a house in Westland Row. It was in every respect a happy marriage. His wife proved a true helpmate and companion to him, sharing in all his joys and sorrows, stimulating his ambition and keeping always one place quiet for him, where, when worn out by professional cares or discouraged by the apparent hopelessness of the political struggle on which he had entered, he was always sure of finding peace and sympathy and encouragement. It is not given to every man, especially to such as pass their lives in the fierce blaze of public opinion, so to regulate their conduct as always to avoid the arrows of scandal. But in O'Connell's case they fell harmlessly by his side, and if it was indeed true, as calumny asserted, that on one occasion he allowed his attentions to a married lady to pass the strict bounds of propriety, this, in the case of one of the best-abused men that ever lived, was surely but as the dust in the balance, underlying the pure gold of affection that shines through every written word of his correspondence.

Certainly, the woman who, after fifteen years of wedded life, could write the following letter to her husband can hardly be called unhappy:

"My own darling Dan,—I assure you, my darling, you are our continual subject. When a kind husband or father is spoken of, Ellen and Kate will exclaim, 'Mamma, sure he is not so good a husband or father as our father!' You may guess, darling, what my reply is. You know what you deserve, and you are aware that in existence I don't think there is such a husband and

father as you are, and always have been. Indeed, I think it quite impossible there could, and if the truest and tenderest affection can repay you, believe me that I feel and bear it for you. In truth, my own Dan, I am always at a loss for words to convey to you how I love and doat on you. Many and many a time I exclaim to myself, 'What a happy creature am I; how grateful should I be to Providence for bestowing on me such a husband!' And so, indeed, I am. We will, Love, shortly be fifteen years married, and I can answer that I never have had cause to repent it. I have, darling, experienced all the happiness of the married state without feeling any of its cares, thanks to a fond and indulgent husband."

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CHAPTER II.

IRELAND AFTER THE UNION.

1803–1812.

THE great experiment had been made. Ireland, which, since the days of Henry II. had led a more or less independent existence; bound only to her sister-island by the bond of allegiance which both Englishmen and Irishmen owed to the same crown, had now, for legislative purposes, by the Act of Union, become absorbed in the latter. Her parliament—at once her pride and her shame—had ceased its separate existence. Her ancient nobility, with privileges curtailed and hereditary lustre dimmed, sat silent and despised under the contemptuous stare of the independent barons of England. Her representatives, diminished in numbers to the requirements of a mere province, without the power, or even the will, to influence by one hair's breadth the fate of their country, sank into ignominious silence, or sought for compensation in the wider interests of the Empire. Over the whole island there hung a silence like unto the silence of death. Was it really death? Were the energies of

the nation actually paralysed? Or, was it not rather the tranquillity that follows a storm: the harbinger of peaceful days to come? Had the great experiment succeeded? Had Pitt at last solved the great problem that had defied the wisdom of all the illustrious statesman of the past? Or had he committed the greatest blunder of which any statesman was capable? Who should say? History would interpret it by the events of the future.

Suddenly out of the silence there fell upon the startled ears of the metropolis the sound of a call to arms. On that quiet summer evening, the 23rd July, 1803, a fresh insurrection had broken out. For a moment Thomas Street was filled by a rushing, thronging crowd. For a moment there was a real danger lest Dublin Castle should fall into their hands. Half an hour later their leader, the ill-fated but high-souled Robert Emmet, was a fugitive among the Wicklow hills, and of the insurrection nothing remained but the corpse of one grey-headed old man, a judge of the land, Lord Kilwarden, than whom Ireland never had a warmer or a truer friend, done to death in a mistake. Yes! the whole thing was a mistake.

"I ask you," said O'Connell, "whether a madder scheme was ever devised by a Bedlamite? Here was Mr. Emmet, having got together about £1200 in money, and seventy-four men; whereupon he makes war upon King George III., with 150,000 of the best troops in Europe, and the wealth of three kingdoms at his command! Why, my good sir, poor Emmet's scheme was as wild as anything in romance."

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But mad and visionary as the scheme was, it is out of such stuff that the history of Ireland is chiefly made up. Time after time had the Irish measured their strength against the might of England, each time to reap only defeat and irretrievable disaster. When would they learn the folly of these heroic experiments?

There, keeping watch and ward in the street for six nights together, so long as the panic lasted, dressed in the uniform of the Lawyers' Yeomanry Corps, learning among other things that to entrust civilians with a bayonet was not perhaps the best way to restore order, stood one whose life's business it was to instruct his fellow-countrymen in the efficacy of constitutional agitation; to turn them aside from midnight conspiracy and frantic rebellion; to convince them that the pen of the gownsman and the voice of the orator are more effective weapons than the sword of the soldier and the knife of the assassin; but above all to teach them that only through national unity, through singleness of aim and purpose, and the laying aside of party feuds and party jealousies could they ever expect to attain to national independence. A difficult—nay, an almost impossible—undertaking it might well have seemed in the case of a country so torn to pieces, as Ireland was, by religious, political, social, and agrarian dissensions. The one point from which a man might have worked had been destroyed when Pitt destroyed the Irish parliament. For, ignorant and bigoted as were many of those who sat in it; accessible as were many of them to the influence of bribes and offices; yet they

were not wholly inaccessible to the claims of justice and humanity, nor to the influence of popular opinion. The victory of '82 and the concessions to the Roman Catholics proved this. True, its deliberations had sometimes resembled the wrangling of a bear-garden; true, indeed, that the Imperial Parliament would probably deliberate more calmly—if, indeed, it condescended to deliberate at all. This was the danger. For how could three-fourths of the population insist on having their wants and wishes attended to if, excluded from representation, they were likewise deprived of the influence of public opinion? Let the reader compare the division lists during the first quarter of this century with those of more modern times, and he will be able to appreciate in something like its formidable dimensions the task which O'Connell undertook, and if only partially, yet not wholly unsuccessfully, accomplished.

O'Connell's first appearance in public, as we have remarked, was at a meeting of a few spirited Roman Catholic citizens of Dublin to protest against the Union. But as a body the Catholics regarded the measure with languid interest. Their leaders, if not convinced, had at least been induced to hope that the surrender of their national independence would be followed by their complete religious emancipation. The hope had proved delusive, and Pitt, unable wholly to exonerate himself from blame, had repudiated his responsibility by resigning office. It was a case of moral bankruptcy: for the Union remained, though the price stipulated for it had not been paid. The result greatly damaged the

reputation of the chiefs of the Catholic party; but the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, during the years immediately following the Union, effectually, if not entirely, silenced all remonstrance. Nevertheless as time went on symptoms began to manifest themselves that the younger Catholics were growing impatient of the timid policy of their nominal leaders. Already at a semi-informal meeting in February, 1805—the first that had been held since the Rebellion—O'Connell, now beginning to take an active interest in politics, had protested against further delay in agitating their claims, and so far successfully that the meeting very cautiously and after much hesitation resolved to petition parliament. The petition, the first of a long series to the Imperial Parliament, was presented on 25th March by Lord Grenville in the Upper and by Fox in the Lower House. Among the signatures appended to it that of O'Connell appears as seventeenth in the list.

It was of course rejected; but its rejection, far from seeming a reason for relaxing their efforts and falling back into hopeless apathy, was in O'Connell's opinion only an argument in favour of redoubled exertions and sessional petitions. In this, however, he had reluctantly to yield to the will of the majority, which in their desire not to hamper Fox, who had in the meantime succeeded to office, thought it wiser to refrain from agitating the question, leaving it to that statesman's generosity and well-known sympathy with them to advocate their claims at whatever opportunity should seem to him most propitious.

The opportunity never arrived; but after Fox's death, a few months later, bolder counsels began to prevail. At a Catholic aggregate on 17th February, 1807, O'Connell, aided perhaps by the accidental absence of John Keogh of Mount Jerome—a Goliath among the Catholics of an older generation and still, though tottering on the edge of the grave, not without influence among them—succeeded in carrying the meeting with him. What, he asked, was the meaning of the objection that to petition parliament for admission into the constitution was to injure the Empire? Was it an injury to offer the allegiance of five millions of subjects? He would tell those who spoke thus that emancipation would long ago have been conceded by their Protestant countrymen in their domestic legislature had not the Union, with rude violence and amid the wreck of the country, swept away every opportunity of kindness and liberality on the one hand and every occasion of gratitude and affection on the other. By a small majority the meeting resolved to again petition parliament. But the petition was never presented. The courage with which O'Connell's words had inspired it soon evaporated, and Keogh, indignant at the presumption to instruct *him* in the management of the Catholic business, procured its withdrawal at a subsequent meeting on 18th April, nominally out of deference to the wishes of the veteran advocate of their claims, Henry Grattan.

Nevertheless the "dignified silence," or "wait-a-while" policy of Keogh and his aristocratic friends had received a blow from which it never recovered.

"Keogh," said O'Connell, "was undoubtedly useful in his day. But he was one who would rather that the cause should fail than that anybody but himself should have the honour of carrying it." The judgment, though severe, was not unmerited; for the Catholics, in the unbiassed opinion of Wolfe Tone, owed Keogh little thanks for the way in which he had bungled their affairs in 1793. The growing influence of O'Connell was apparent at the next aggregate, on 19th January, 1808. Again the voice of the "dignified silence" party made itself heard in favour of delay. The time was not propitious; their avowed enemies were in power, and the like. But all these objections—objections that could only manifest a spirit of division, a feeling of party, and a miserable ambition of leadership—O'Connell swept aside, and under the inspiration of his eloquence the meeting unanimously resolved to petition. From that day he and not Keogh was the leader of the Catholics.

The first step had been taken. Whither would it lead? Not as yet to emancipation; but to dissensions, heart-burnings, petty jealousies, despondency, and apathy among the Catholics themselves. Only through much tribulation and long-suffering were the Catholics to work out their freedom. And the cause of all this misfortune was, in the first place, the man who, though himself a Protestant, had unselfishly devoted the evening of a long and useful life to the advancement of their cause!

On 23d May, 1808, Grattan presented the Catholic petition to the House of Commons, and two days

later in referring it to committee he announced that he was able to infuse a little novelty into the debate in consequence of his having been authorised by the Catholics to consent to a veto by the crown on all episcopal nominations, or in other words that no Catholic bishop should be nominated without the express approbation of the sovereign. The statement made a favourable impression on the House and disarmed many of the opponents of emancipation. But in Ireland the announcement was received with very mingled feelings. No one could of course believe that Grattan had made the statement without having some good grounds for it; but it was equally certain that no such concession had been made by the Catholics publicly as a body. It is unnecessary to discuss the details of the intrigue that had led to the unfortunate misunderstanding. Suffice it to say that while the Catholic aristocracy, and all those who hoped to profit in the distribution of the loaves and fishes of office, regarded the concession with favour as a short-cut to the realisation of their wishes, the bulk of their co-religionists repudiated it with indignation. Neither side would give way, and so, divided into vetoists and anti-vetoists, wasting their strength in mutual recrimination and mutual abuse, the Catholics ceased, for a time, to excite anything but the contempt and derision of their opponents. Only O'Connell never despaired of their ultimate success, insisting continually, in season and out of season, on the necessity of constant agitation; but preaching for the most part to dull and hostile ears.

But the baneful effects of the Union had, by this

time, begun to be felt in other quarters than among the Catholics, and nowhere with greater intensity than among the merchants of the metropolis. This was to be expected. For the conditions which had led to the extraordinary development of Dublin during the latter half of the eighteenth century—the confluence thither of the aristocracy and gentry during the meeting of parliament, stirring into activity all those trades and professions that follow in the wake of wealth—now that they had ceased to exist, their disappearance had produced a corresponding state of depression. It was as if the centre of a great industry had suddenly been annihilated; and as Rome suffered when Constantine removed the capital of the empire to the shores of the Bosphorus, so Dublin suffered when Pitt transferred the Irish legislature to London. What Dublin lost London gained; but the gain to the larger and richer town did not compensate for the loss to the smaller and poorer. The mansions of the nobility and gentry, formerly replete with elegance and luxury, standing tenantless and deserted, or, if inhabited at all, so subdivided and sub-let that each apartment was the abode of over-crowded poverty and squalor; the unfrequented streets, the steadily-rising list of failures and bankruptcies—all these were the sure signs of decadence. In proportion as the city declined commercially so did it decline intellectually. What visitor to Dublin in the early decades of this century could ever think of comparing it with the Dublin of Charlemont's time? Elsewhere the signs of depression were not so visible, and if indeed Limerick,

Cork, Galway, and Waterford remained stationary, Belfast was actually growing and beginning to rival Dublin itself in wealth and importance. But Belfast had never known what it was to be the capital of the kingdom, and the causes which were leading to its increasing prosperity were natural and wholly devoid of political significance. Throughout the country generally the yearly growing number of absentee proprietors, bringing with it the dissolution of those personal ties which had hitherto existed between landlord and tenant and helped to mollify the asperities of a state of affairs having its origin in conquest and confiscation, pointed inevitably in the direction of Encumbered Estates Acts and the transference of the soil from gentlemen into the hands of money lenders. The facts were too patent to admit of dispute, and men, who had hitherto fiercely opposed each other in politics and religion, found themselves drawn together on a common platform by a perception of their common misfortune.

In the darkness that had fallen on the Catholic cause the prospect of finding in the repeal of the Union a fresh rallying-point for agitation, in which Irishmen of every religious persuasion, Protestant, Catholic, and Presbyterian, could take part, seemed to O'Connell an unexpected blessing. It was with extreme satisfaction, therefore, that he accepted an invitation from the high sheriff of Dublin, Sir James Riddall, to attend an aggregate meeting of the citizens, freemen and freeholders of Dublin, at the Royal Exchange, on 18th September, 1810, to consider the propriety of petitioning parliament for a repeal

of the Union. Speaking in support of a resolution to appoint a committee to prepare the petition, he said that the Union, so far from healing the wounds of their country, had only added another element of discord. No Irishman could look back on the ten years that had elapsed since the Union—ten years of torpor and silence—without a sense of shame and indignation. It was a melancholy period—a period in which Ireland saw her artificers starved, her tradesmen begging, her merchants become bankrupts, her gentry banished, her nobility degraded. Within that period domestic turbulence had broken out from day to day into open violence and murder; religious dissensions aggravated and embittered; credit and commerce annihilated; taxation augmented in amount and vexation. But as the Union had only been possible through their own folly and religious dissensions, so its repeal was only possible through mutual tolerance and national unity. The Protestant alone could not expect to liberate his country; the Roman Catholic alone could not do it; neither could the Presbyterian; but amalgamate the three into the Irishman, and the Union stood repealed. Let them, he begged them, learn discretion from their enemies. *They* had crushed Ireland by fomenting religious discord: let them serve her by abandoning it for ever. Let each man give up his share of the mischief: let each man forsake every feeling of rancour. He said not this to barter with them. He required no equivalent. Whatever course they took, his mind was fixed. He would trample under foot the Catholic claims could they interfere

with Repeal. Nay, were Mr. Perceval to-morrow to offer him the repeal of the Union upon the terms of re-enacting the entire penal code, he declared it from his heart and in the presence of his God, that he would most cheerfully embrace his offer.

But the poison of religious discord had entered too deeply into the life-blood of the nation to yield thus easily to the medicine of remonstrance, however wisely or eloquently administered. An old tale, and soon told in the case of Ireland, to relate how enthusiasm was followed by apathy; and in short how the whole movement burnt itself out in ineffectual speeches and cheers; ineffectual to attract attention as the rattling of the prisoner's chains turning restlessly in his sleep is to disturb the security of his gaoler. Nothing, it was clear to O'Connell, could be expected so long as the Catholics were divided amongst themselves. How to compose their differences, and to give greater emphasis to their demands than was afforded by the spasmodic operation of aggregate assemblies, and the listless action of an irresponsible committee, was the problem that awaited solution.

In the early days of Catholic agitation their meetings had partaken of the character of a representative assembly, and were indeed like those of the volunteers, a sort of *imperium in imperio*. That such assemblies as that which gained for itself the nick-name of the Back-Lane Parliament constituted a real menace to the independence of Parliament could not be denied, and immediately after the concessions of 1793 an act was passed, called the Convention Act,

which, it may be remarked, was not formally repealed till 1879—rendering such representative meetings for any purposes whatever illegal in the future. From that time forward the affairs of the Catholics had rested with a Committee, elected by a general meeting, whose business had restricted itself to the preparation of petitions to Parliament. The question was how to give to such Committee the character and authority of a representative body without infringing the provisions of the Convention Act. The first step was to increase the size of the Committee. This was done at an aggregate meeting on 19th July, 1810, when the preparation of a petition was entrusted to forty-two persons; their appointment being safeguarded by a resolution to the effect that they were not to be regarded as the representatives of the Catholic body or any portion thereof. The next step was taken by the Committee itself at a subsequent meeting on 29th December, when a resolution —based on a previous one of 30th July, suggesting the formation of local committees holding communication with the general Committee in Dublin as likely to prove highly useful to the Catholic cause—was passed, requiring their secretary to address an invitation to the Catholics of Ireland generally to appoint managers of the Catholic petition in each county. The invitation was accepted here and there, and when the Committee met on 2d February, 1811, to frame a petition for presentation to parliament, the presence of a number of country gentlemen, as managers for their respective counties, led to a fierce dispute, the opposition being led by Keogh's son,

Cornelius, supported by Lord Ffrench, who insisted that the Committee had no right, without infringing the Convention Act, to add to its numbers beyond that fixed by the aggregate meeting from which it had derived its authority. The objection was met by O'Connell, who argued that as the Committee itself was not a representative assembly, the presence of the managers could not be regarded as a breach of the Convention Act, inasmuch as, according to a trite and quaint maxim, which no one disputed, "a deputy could not constitute a deputy." It was his first attempt at driving a coach and six through an act of Parliament—an art at which he afterwards became adept.

But it soon appeared that government was not going to allow the action of the Committee to pass unchallenged. On 12th February the Chief Secretary, Wellesley Pole, issued a circular letter to all sheriffs, chief magistrates, etc., throughout the country, authorising them to arrest and summarily imprison all such Catholics as, in contravention of the Act 33, George III., chap. 29, were engaged in appointing representatives, delegates, or managers, to act on their behalf, as members of an unlawful assembly sitting in Dublin, and calling itself the Catholic Committee. The letter, a mere *brutum fulmen* intended to deter the Catholics from the course upon which they were entering, gave rise to a debate in the House of Commons on 22d February, when it was sharply criticised as unconstitutionally trenching on the sacred right of petitioning. But before any information regarding the debate

DANIEL O'CONNELL, M.P.

FROM A PAINTING BY BERNARD MULRENIN, R.H.A., IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

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could reach Ireland, matters there had entered on a new phase. For the Catholic Committee, reassembling on 23d February to resume its consideration of the petition, an order was conveyed from the Castle requiring its instant dispersal. This the Catholics refused to do ; but after an angry wrangle with two police magistrates, sent to enforce the order of government, they adjourned for three days in order to allow of a conference between their leaders and the Chief Secretary. The conference never took place. On 26th February the Catholics reassembled, according to the adjournment, and transacted their business without further interruption.

The Committee had scored its first victory. It had risked a collision with the government, and the government had declined the challenge. Elated with the success, the Catholics started a vigorous campaign against administration. At an aggregate meeting on 8th March, O'Connell, in a very temperate and constitutional speech, moved to address the Prince Regent on the subject of Pole's letter, and to petition for his removal and that of the Lord-Lieutenant, the Duke of Richmond. The motion was carried, and other meetings for a similar purpose were held elsewhere. At all these meetings O'Connell was the chief speaker. He was, indeed, the heart and soul of the agitation. His energy was amazing, and only equalled by his enthusiasm. He had recently moved into a new house, No. 30 (now 58) Merrion Square, South ; but not a detail in the furnishing of it that could add to the comfort of his wife escaped his personal supervision. Busy all day

long, either on circuit, or in the law-courts, he could still find time to arrange meetings, draw up resolutions, make speeches and in short direct the whole business of the Catholics, struggling ceaselessly to arouse his countrymen from their torpor.

The principle of appointing managers, though attacked, had prevailed. Was it possible to extend the principle still further without running foul of the Convention Act? At any rate it was worth trying. Anything, in O'Connell's opinion, was better than stagnation—even prosecution. Accordingly at a general meeting held in Fishamble Street theatre, on 9th July, for the purpose of appointing a Committee to prepare the Catholic petition, it was resolved that the said Committee do consist of the Catholic peers and their eldest sons, the Catholic baronets, the prelates of the Catholic Church in Ireland, ten persons to be appointed by the Catholics in each county in Ireland, and also of five persons to be appointed by the Catholic inhabitants of each parish in Dublin. O'Connell, who was suffering from a slight indisposition, and spoke with difficulty, confined himself to a few remarks. In the propriety of the step they were about to take, he expressed his entire concurrence, especially in so far as it went to give the people the free, unbiassed, and constitutional right of selecting a Committee. He considered it a justifiable experiment, and cheerfully offered himself as the first victim of a legal prosecution. If any one parish in the city of Dublin would do him the honour of electing him to represent them in the common council, he was ready to give

bail and let the legal question, arising on the construction of the statute, be thus settled.

Government accepted the challenge. On 2d August a proclamation was issued pronouncing such elections to be illegal, and ten days later a number of gentlemen who had taken part in them were arrested on the warrant of Chief-Justice Downes. The trial was appointed for November. On 19th October the Catholic Committee, as reconstituted, assembled in Fishamble Street theatre. The business of the meeting had been concluded, and the members were already dispersing when two police magistrates appeared on the scene. Their object was unmistakable; but this time they had arrived too late. On 21st November began the trial of Dr. Edward Sheridan, one of the gentlemen concerned in the illegal elections. Though not leading counsel in the case, the plan of the defence had been arranged by O'Connell. The case for the prosecution turned upon the construction to be placed on the words in the Convention Act "under *pretence* of petitioning," which it was agreed meant *purpose*. The defence admitted that the meeting was for the bona fide purpose of petitioning, that there was no pretence about it, and therefore did not fall within the ban of the Act. In charging the jury Chief-Justice Downes let it clearly be seen that, whatever construction the words were capable of, in his opinion the Committee, in its new shape, was an illegal assembly within the meaning of the Act; but the jury took the opposite view and acquitted Dr. Sheridan.

The victory of the Catholics was, however, short-

lived. A counter-prosecution against Chief-Justice Downes for illegal arrest failed; and on reassembling in Fishamble Street theatre on 23d December the Committee found the room in possession of a police magistrate. A scene of intense excitement followed. Requesting to be informed if the meeting was that of the Catholic Committee, but obtaining no direct answer to his question, the magistrate took it upon himself to decide that it was, and ordered it instantly to disperse. Failing, however, to induce the chairman, Lord Fingal, to leave the chair, he forcibly removed him by gently pushing him from it. The meeting, thereupon, voted the Hon. Thomas Barnwall into his place; but, yielding to the advice of Sir Edward Bellew, immediately afterwards quietly separated. Some of the members then proceeded to the Crown and Anchor tavern, whither the indefatigable police magistrate followed them, but retired without further molesting them on learning that they had met in their individual capacity. It was clear that the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Wellesley Pole were in earnest this time. They had failed to convict Dr. Sheridan; but they had defeated the attack on Chief-Justice Downes, they had dispersed the Committee, and in January of the following year, 1812, they managed to secure the conviction of Mr. Thomas Kirwan on a similar charge to that preferred against Sheridan. But the resources of the Catholics were by no means exhausted. For assembling in aggregate meeting on 26th December they entrusted the management of their affairs to a Catholic Board, which was, however, merely the

Catholic Committee under a new name. Their tactics did not deceive government; but as the Board had been expressly appointed for the purpose of petitioning, it did not feel justified in suppressing it, though determined to keep a close watch on its proceedings.

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CHAPTER III.

PARLIAMENT AND THE CATHOLIC CLAIMS.

1812–1813.

ON 11th May, 1812, a bullet fired by a madman, named Bellingham, cut short the life of the Prime Minister of England, Mr. Perceval. The deed sent a thrill of horror through the country; but it was not without a certain feeling of relief that men saw an end put to one of the most bigoted and reactionary administrations of modern times.

"For my part," said O'Connell, "I feel unaffected horror at his fate, and all trace of resentment for his crimes is obliterated; but I do not forget that he was a narrow-minded bigot, a paltry statesman, and a bad minister; that every species of public corruption and profligacy had in him a flippant and pert advocate; that every advance towards reform or economy had in him a decided enemy; and that the liberties of the people were the object of his derision."

Surely now, however, thought the Catholics, now that his baneful influence was removed, the Regent

would have the courage, as he was long supposed to have the will, to free himself from his father's servants and, mindful of his old promises, promises often repeated, call round him more liberal-minded men.

The fond delusion was soon dispelled. His refusal to admit a deputation of Catholics to a personal interview, and the reconstruction of an administration on lines avowedly hostile to their claims, was evidence sufficient to convince the blindest that no considerations of honour would induce the Prince to run the slightest risk on their behalf. The indignation of the Catholics found vent in the famous "witchery resolutions,"—a thinly veiled attack on the Regent's *liaison* with Lady Hertford—at an aggregate meeting on 18th June.

"We learn," said the Catholics, "with deep disappointment and anguish, how cruelly the promised boon of Catholic freedom has been intercepted by the fatal witchery of an unworthy secret influence, hostile to our fairest hopes, spurning alike the sanctions of public and private virtue, the demands of personal gratitude, and the sacred obligations of plighted honour. To this impure source we trace, but too distinctly, our afflicted hopes and protracted servitude, the arrogant invasion of the undoubted right of petitioning, the acrimony of illegal state prosecutions, the surrender of Ireland to prolonged oppression, and the insult and the many experiments, equally pitiful and perilous, recently practised upon the habitual passiveness of an ill-treated but high-spirited people."

What the resolutions lacked in direct application was supplied by O'Connell, whose indictment of the

Regent created an extraordinary sensation. But what would have been the violence of O'Connell's language had it been known, as it now is, that the Duke of Richmond and Wellesley Pole in dispersing the Committee had been merely acting on the secret instructions of the Regent himself?

It was a petulant and even foolish explosion of wrath, natural enough perhaps under the circumstances, but calculated to do harm by creating fresh obstacles in the way of emancipation. But the settlement of the Catholic question had now become a matter of political expediency. It was a disturbing element in English politics. It, and it alone, had prevented Canning and Wellesley accepting office in the new administration at a time when the strain placed upon England by the war with France called for unanimity and vigorous action at home. The question must therefore be settled without further delay. Public opinion in Ireland was divided as to the terms of the settlement. It should therefore be settled without reference to Irish opinion, and solely on the grounds of Imperial policy. Accordingly on 22d June the House of Commons, on the motion of Canning, pledged itself by 235 to 106 to take into its consideration in the following session the laws affecting the Roman Catholics.

The announcement was hailed with lively satisfaction in Ireland. The Catholics, said O'Connell, speaking at an aggregate meeting on 2d July, had reached a momentous period in their history. Thrice before had emancipation seemed within their grasp; thrice had it eluded them—in 1793, when they failed

from timidity; in 1800, when they rejected it as the price of their nationality; in 1806, when they allowed themselves to be deluded by the good intentions of the Whigs. From these errors of the past their conduct now should be free. Their course was plain and simple. It consisted, not in relaxing, but in redoubling their efforts; in pressing forward as a people should do who deserved liberty. Under the banner of "Simple Repeal" Ireland had once before triumphed gloriously. It was a motto of good omen. Let "Simple Repeal" be re-echoed from north to south, from east to west, and should they again fail they would at least have the consolation of knowing that they had deserved success. At Limerick, on 24th July, during the assizes, his language was even more direct. Nothing, he declared, would satisfy the Catholics but their absolute and unqualified emancipation. The talk about securities as the price of their freedom was a base and dastardly insult upon their understanding, and they would have none of it.

Wherever he spoke—at Dublin, at Limerick, at Cork—his words were cheered to the echo. But cheers alone, he reminded his audience, would never lead to victory. He knew well the nature of his countrymen—how soon they were moved to enthusiasm, how quickly their enthusiasm evaporated before the stern realities of every-day life. It was easy, he used to say, to tell a Catholic in the streets by his subdued demeanour and crouching walk. So deeply had the iron of oppression entered their souls that, in order to curry favour with their Protestant

neighbours, they would surrender their most sacred rights, allow themselves to be driven like animals to the polling booths to vote for their bitterest enemy, nay, even to consent to prostitute the virtue of their wives and daughters to the pleasure of their hereditary masters. A pitiful picture, truly, but one which only faintly outlines the depth of the degradation to which the bulk of his countrymen had sunk. And yet out of such unpromising material, out of a nation of slaves, would O'Connell create a nation of freemen.

"Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not,
Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?"

This was the constant refrain of all his speeches: for the reader of them now repeated *ad nauseam.* But O'Connell had no hesitation in repeating himself. "It is not," he said,

"by advancing a political truth once, or twice, or even ten times, that the public will take it up and firmly adopt it. Incessant repetition is required to impress political truths upon the public mind. Men, by always hearing the same things, insensibly associate them with received truisms. They find the facts at last quietly reposing in a corner of their minds, and no more think of doubting them than if they formed part of their religious belief."

In truth, O'Connell had only one lesson to teach; but, once learned, what a change, what a revolution would it effect in the lives and thoughts of Irishmen! Would they ever learn "themselves to strike the blow?" Would they ever have the courage to cast off the shackles of a degrading servitude that

lowered them to the level of beasts, and learn to stand erect like men? The time was coming. As yet the agitation had only touched the wealthier middle class; the bulk of the nation lay steeped in apathy and despair.

Parliament was dissolved on 29th September. The results of the elections in Ireland during the autumn confirmed O'Connell's apprehensions. At Cork, where he had recently spoken amid wild applause, the apathy of the Catholics had lost one of their staunchest supporters, Christopher Hely Hutchinson, his seat; at Newry private and personal interests had prevailed with the Catholics to return an Orangeman, and elsewhere the recreancy and cowardice of wealthy members of their body had told with damaging effect against their cause. The indignation of the Board was intense, and despite the warning voice of O'Connell that they were investing themselves with the powers of an irresponsible inquisition, and scattering the seeds of discord widespread, a motion was passed on 28th November, declaring that such persons as had deserted the tried friends of the Catholics at the late general election were no longer deserving of their confidence. The resolution, as O'Connell predicted, only served to aggravate the situation by causing a split in the Board itself. "One would imagine," said he, "that we really were at a loss for enemies, so sedulous do we appear to be to excite them among ourselves. One would suppose that Ireland was not sufficiently divided and distracted already, but that division and dissension in the Catholic Board could be afforded in addition and as a

pastime." After working infinite mischief, the resolution was, at his earnest entreaty, subsequently rescinded.

Meanwhile the friends of the Catholics in Parliament were employing their time in preparing a bill which, if it did not extend to a final adjustment of the question, was thought to embody all those claims which the Protestants were at all likely under existing circumstances to concede. What those circumstances were, the reader will easily recall for himself. In 1812 Napoleon was at the height of his power, and the head of the Roman Church a prisoner in his hands. What might happen if Pius VII., or his successor, should lend himself to promote the ambitious designs of the Emperor of the French? The danger was perhaps more imaginary than real; but at least it was intelligible. The world had yet to learn that if in spiritual matters the Pope could command the implicit and unquestioning obedience of every Irish Roman Catholic, in temporal matters, in affairs touching his political rights, he was an absolute cipher. In admitting the Catholics, and especially the Irish Catholics, within the pale of the constitution the majority of Englishmen and Scotchmen believed, and conscientiously believed, that they were putting into the hands of their deadliest enemy a weapon to destroy the constitution itself. They remembered the days of Queen Mary, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Spanish Armada, the Irish massacres of 1641, the attempt of James II. to subvert the constitution, the persecutions of Tyrconnell, the rebellion of 1798; they forgot the anti-papal

legislation of pre-Reformation times, the loyalty of the Catholics at the most critical periods of their history, the wars of extermination against the Irish that had led to the rising in '41, the ecclesiastical tyranny of the Puritans, the transplantations and transportations of the Commonwealth, the deportations and sequestrations under the penal code, the fiendish outrages of the Orangemen, the picketings, the half-hangings that had driven the most abject peasantry in the world to take up arms in their own defence. They saw only the result; they overlooked the causes that had given birth to it. Visions of a popish rising still occupied their imagination. They believed that the concession of the Catholic claims would only lead to the establishment of a Catholic tyranny, and that themselves, from being the oppressors, would become the oppressed. They did not believe that national independence was as dear to the Catholic as it was to the Protestant. It is unwise to sneer at their fears. Toleration is a plant of slow growth. Perhaps in an Irish parliament these fears would have carried less weight, and emancipation have already been conceded; but the question had been referred to an assembly of which the great majority knew practically nothing of the country for which they were called upon to legislate.

That an assembly so constituted should have consented to pledge itself to a revision of the laws affecting the Catholics with a view to their amelioration, and on Grattan's motion to have reaffirmed its determination on March 1st, 1813, was a great step forward. In its essential features the Bill to which

Parliament was asked to give its consent was practically the same as that which passed into law sixteen years later *plus* an elaborate oath of allegiance to be taken by all Catholics, whether clergymen or laymen. By this oath the Catholic deposed that he would support the Protestant succession and the existing state of Protestant property, would discover all plots and treasons which came within his knowledge, would not make use of any power he obtained in the state either to its injury or the overthrow of the Protestant Church, and would assent to the nomination of no Catholic bishop or apostolic vicar of whose loyalty and tranquil disposition he was not convinced. The Bill was read a first time on 30th April, and the serious consideration of it deferred for a fortnight. In the interval it underwent a serious alteration. For the security offered by the above oath, seeming to Canning hardly stringent enough to conciliate the more timorous Protestants, he persuaded Grattan to consent to the addition of certain clauses establishing a board of commissioners having power to inspect all correspondence with Rome referring to episcopal nominations, and to veto the appointment of any bishop whose loyalty might be suspected.

In Ireland the initial stages of the Bill were being watched with intense interest. The day following its introduction, the Catholic Board met. Reporters were excluded; but a summary of its proceedings communicated by O'Connell appeared in the *Evening Post* on 4th May. The summary expressed his view of the situation. Leaving the ecclesiastical provisions

"where they might be safely confided—in the hands of the Catholic hierarchy"—and confining himself to its civil enactments, he pronounced the Bill to be restricted in principle (omitting the Protestant dissenters entirely from its consideration), doubtful in its wording, and inadequate to that full relief which had been expected. His conduct in transmitting the report to the newspapers was regarded by many as indiscreet, especially by such as, in their eagerness to clutch at the benefits conferred by the Bill, hoped by their silence to give an appearance of acquiescence in its provisions, and at a subsequent meeting of the Board an attempt was made to censure him by submitting a resolution to the effect that on the date in question "no motion was entertained by the Board, relative to the Catholic Bill, nor any resolution adopted." This O'Connell opposed on the ground that it was manifestly untrue; but for the sake of harmony he offered, if anyone would move "that the Board has not hitherto come to any resolution declaratory of its sentiments on the Catholic Bill," to second it himself. His proposal was adopted by a small majority. But the dispute was symptomatic of graver dissensions in the near future.

The fact was, O'Connell knew that the Board was divided on the question of the securities, and had deliberately furnished the report to the *Evening Post* with the express object of forcing the hand of the vetoists. No formally worded motion in condemnation of the Bill had indeed been passed by the Board, but the weight of opinion had been decidedly

against it, and it was well that the public should know it. Silence at such a time was sure to be misinterpreted as approbation. But it was not so much the civil enactments as (after the addition of the Canning clauses) the ecclesiastical provisions that troubled him. The acceptance or rejection of them had, as he expressed it, been left to the clergy themselves, but not without a word of warning, that if they decided in favour of them he would still reserve to himself the right of protesting against any measure that might tarnish the last relic of national independence—the last fragment of the ancient pride and greatness of Imperial Ireland—the independence of her Church.

The warning was not neglected. On 27th May, the Irish prelates decided that the ecclesiastical clauses were utterly incompatible with the discipline of the Roman Catholic Church and could not be acceded to without incurring the guilt of schism. O'Connell did not try to conceal his satisfaction at the result. In one quarter, at least, unanimity prevailed. When the Board next met, on 29th May, he rose to propose a special vote of thanks to the bishops for their patriotic conduct.

"The Catholic prelates of Ireland," said he, and his voice rang triumphantly through the room, "deserve your eternal gratitude. They have stood forward manfully and without disguise to assist you in getting rid of a Bill which purported to be for your relief, but which, in reality, would have perpetuated your degradation and slavery. Had they consulted their worldly interest they would have supported the Bill; but the

sacred calls of duty made them reject such considerations with contempt. And they were right, most manifestly right, in rejecting it. Nothing but mischief and degradation could have resulted from the commission proposed in the Bill. For let them consider the probable constitution of the proposed board of ecclesiastical commissioners in the hands of the Duke of Richmond—of that man whose administration had been signalised by a sullen and sulky opposition to the Catholics of Ireland, and whose most distinguishing characteristic as a chief governor was that he continued to hate the Papists, he knew not why nor wherefore. For president they might safely reckon on that ludicrous enemy of theirs, who had got, in jest, the name he deserved in good earnest of 'Orange Peel'—a raw youth squeezed out of the workings of I know not what factory in England, and sent over to Ireland before he had got rid of the foppery of perfumed handkerchiefs and thin shoes, upon the simple ground that, having vindicated the murderous Walcheren expedition, he was thought to be a lad ready to vindicate anything and everything. After him would come my Lord Manners, a gentleman certainly, but quite as ignorant of the wants, wishes, feelings, and dispositions of the Irish people, as he was the day before he arrived in the country. Too decent to inspire any disgust, too polite to give personal offence, too weak to discriminate between the artful misrepresentations of bigotry and the plain language of truth, with the natural propensity of a small mind to the practical details of intolerance, he was in fact such a man as bigotry would select as her choicest instrument. With him was sure to be associated his Grace the Duke of Richmond's special adviser in ecclesiastical affairs, the Right Hon. Dr. Duigenan, appointed for no other

reason than being, like the tanner's dog, chained up by day and let loose by night, he was particularly fitted for the task of worrying popish bishops. Nor was William Saurin, the Attorney-General, likely to be wanting, and what a day would that be for Ireland when the grandson of a French Huguenot should sit in judgment on the Catholic hierarchy of the land! From this disgrace the bishops had saved them, and theirs, without any regard to the event, should be the praise and glory."

As a matter of fact, the action of the Catholic episcopacy had nothing whatever to do with the defeat of the Bill, which had been dropped in consequence of the rejection in committee of the first clause in it, admitting the Catholics to sit in Parliament, two days before the bishops had pronounced against it. But in his strictures on the probable constitution and action of the commission O'Connell hit the nail directly on the head. "I perceive," wrote Peel to the Duke of Richmond on 21st May, "that the Chief Secretary is made President of the Catholic Cabinet which his Majesty is in future to have, and in his absence the senior Privy Councillor; so that it is possible Dr. Duigenan may preside." Better evidence as to the insidious character of the Bill O'Connell could not have desired. But the Board was hard to convince. The loaves and fishes of office were a bait too tempting to be resisted by many. Despite O'Connell's exhortations to unanimity, they insisted on dividing, and it was only after a fierce struggle that the vote of thanks to the bishops was carried by 61 to 20.

SIR ROBERT PEEL

FROM A PAINTING BY JOHN LINNELL, IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

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The die was cast. Henceforth there could be no question of a compromise. The battle of the securities must be fought out till one side or the other gave way. From that day forward the party that favoured the veto ceased to attend the meetings of the Board, and with their withdrawal the prospect of immediate emancipation receded into the distance. It was a bitter draught to drink, and no man felt the bitterness of it more than did O'Connell. On his devoted head fell all the abuse and contumely of disappointed ambition. But not for one moment did he quail before the storm of angry passion that raged around him. What recked he of the animosity of men who for their own private advantage would have compromised the independence of their Church —"of men who discounted their consciences and obtained money by their pretensions of piety"?

The Bill was gone—for that he thanked God; but the star of hope still shone, and emancipation, if deferred for a time, would come, when it came, without any such disgraceful conditions. That come it must, he never for a moment doubted. "Yes," he assured the great assembly of his countrymen that, at his invitation, met together in Fishamble Street theatre on 15th June, to render thanks for their deliverance, and to renew their petition for the total and unqualified repeal of the penal laws,—

"Yes, the hour of your emancipation is at hand; you will, you must be, emancipated, not by the operation of any force or violence, which is unnecessary, and would be illegal on your part; but by the repetition of your constitutional demands by petition, and still more by the

pressure of circumstances and the great progress of events."

Meanwhile, let their rulers delay emancipation but yet a little while, let them allow their discussions to continue, let them suffer their agitators to proceed, let the love of country and even the desire of notoriety be permitted to excite fresh agitators, and above all, let the popular mind become accustomed to the consideration of public subjects and to the vehemence of political contest, and they knew little of human nature who imagined that with a breath they could still the tempest they should thus have excited, or be able to quiet a people whom they should thus have roused to a sense of their wrongs and to a knowledge of their own strength and importance. Their ultimate triumph rested with themselves. Nothing but their own folly or crime could withhold it from them. But alas for Ireland! Her liberties depended upon the prudence of a people of the most inflammable passions, goaded almost to madness by Orange insults and oppressions, and exposed at the same time to the secret seductions of the agents and emissaries of those very Orange oppressors. Let them yield to these seductions, let them commit a single crime, a single illegal act, and the Habeas Corpus Act would again be suspended, the reign of torture and of terror would again be renewed, and the cause of Ireland would be lost, and lost for ever. For himself, he would tell them that, should ever that fatal day arrive, they would find him arrayed against them. There would not be so heavy a heart; but there would not be

a more ready hand to sustain the constitution against every enemy.

It was a memorable—an epoch-making—speech in the history of Ireland. Often enough before had Irishmen heard their wrongs dilated upon with the object of urging them into deeds of violence and of seeking vengeance with their own hands. Often had the example of revolutionary France been held up before them as worthy of imitation. It was something new to be told that however grievous their wrongs, however intolerable their grievances, yet, for the sake of the constitution they must learn to bear them like men, seeking for redress only by such means and through such channels as were afforded by the constitution itself. Burke and Grattan, it is true, had preached the same doctrine, but their words had reached the few and educated only. O'Connell had another audience before him. He was speaking to the Irish nation, to a nation sorely tried by oppression, yet struggling under grievous disadvantages towards unity and freedom. To him, it was no mere question of theoretical politics, but a matter of life and death. None knew better than he did how prone his countrymen were to deeds of violence ; but he knew the power of England as well, and the benefits of the connection with her. Not separation—the charge that he wished for separation was "false as hell" ; but admission into the constitution and the restoration of national independence were what he wanted. Let his countrymen cease from vainly appealing to the sword, from midnight conspiracies, from brutal murders and houghing of

harmless animals; let them learn to reverence the constitution, to respect the law, and as surely as the sun would rise to-morrow so, in the course of events, would their freedom be realised; and not their freedom only, but their national independence as well. It was a strange speech to issue from the lips of a "professional agitator," and all the stranger when one recalls the circumstances under which it was delivered.

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CHAPTER IV.

IN DEFENCE OF THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

1813.

OF all the weapons in the arsenal of constitutional agitation, the most powerful is undoubtedly that of the journalistic press. A free press is at once the sign and guarantee of free government. It is the very conscience of a nation. To bridle it or to corrupt it is an act of despotism so atrocious as to deserve the execration of civilisation. Fortunately, it is also an act of which despotism alone is capable; for where the forms, at least, of constitutional government are respected, however much the spirit of it may be violated, it is impossible altogether to destroy the independence of the press. That in Ireland, where government has more often than not found itself in direct antagonism to the wishes of the bulk of the population, the corruption of the press should have formed a principal means of controlling public opinion is unfortunately only too true. Equally true is it that government has seldom been at a loss to find instruments like the notorious "Sham Squire," the associate of spies and informers,

ready, for this or that consideration, to prostitute their abilities in its service. On the other hand there have not been wanting journalists, who have never worshipped in the house of Rimmon, who have never forfeited their title to self-respect, who through good and ill report, through fine and imprisonment, have never faltered in the path of duty. Of such was John Magee, the elder, the founder, proprietor, and editor of the Dublin *Evening Post*, a newspaper which, with perhaps the largest circulation of any in Ireland, had advocated with unprecedented fearlessness the cause of national independence in the days preceding the Union, and which, now in the hands of his son, had become the chief organ of Roman Catholic opinion.

On 3d June, the *Evening Post* announced to its readers that its proprietor had been committed to Kilmainham gaol on a charge of publishing a libel against the Duke of Richmond. This, the paper reminded its readers, was the third Dublin printer that had been imprisoned under his Grace's "conciliatory government." The announcement created an extraordinary sensation. Everyone guessed that the alleged libel was a mere pretext for a determined effort on the part of the government to silence the chief organ of the Catholic party; and the guess, as now appears from Peel's secret correspondence with the Speaker of the House of Commons, hit the mark. The article for which Magee was to be prosecuted was the work of a prominent member of the Catholic Board, Dennis Scully, the author of an important work on the penal laws, and of whom it

was said that he was so much of a lawyer that "he could not take his tea without a stratagem." It consisted of nine columns in three successive numbers of the *Evening Post*, and purported to be a review of the Duke of Richmond's administration, with the object of warning his successor from pursuing the errors of his Grace's conduct. The device was an old one for airing the nation's grievances, and one which Grattan himself, as every reader of *Baratariana* knows, had in early days practised against the Marquis of Harcourt in language far more scathing than anything that ever issued from Dennis Scully's pen. For the prosecution, William Saurin, the Attorney-General, and for upwards of a quarter of a century the virtual ruler of Ireland, was responsible.

Saurin, the descendant of a Huguenot refugee, was a sound lawyer. Without possessing superior abilities of any sort, he had raised himself by studious application to the top of his profession. He had waited long for promotion. His early career had been one of hardship and disappointment. In his opposition to the Union he had proceeded to such lengths as to incur the censure of the Marquis Cornwallis, and narrowly to escape the loss of his silk gown. But after the Union his conduct had been most exemplary, and his reward had been proportionate to his loyalty. Men wondered at the completeness of his conversion; but there was really little cause for wonder. The man who had threatened to raise a rebellion rather than submit to the extinction of the national legislature was the same

who was now prosecuting John Magee, and seeking by every means within his power to suppress the Catholic agitation. His opinions had not changed one iota. He was just as good a patriot in 1813 as he had been in 1799; for his patriotism had never gone so far as to include the Roman Catholics. He was an ascendancy man pure and simple, and had been so all his life. To say that he hated the Catholics individually is perhaps doing him injustice; he rather pitied and despised them. But he hated Roman Catholicism with a fierce and bitter hatred, because he feared it. Protestantism, in his opinion, was synonymous with liberty, Catholicism with slavery. To tolerate Catholicism was to palter with his conscience and to betray the cause of truth and righteousness. Beliefs such as these naturally rendered him a formidable antagonist to the Catholics, while the high and indeed irreproachable character he bore in private life added a dignity to the narrowness of his creed, and gave to his opinions an overwhelming influence with his colleagues in the administration.

Such was the man who had urged the prosecution of the editor of the *Evening Post*, and it was with a certain grim pleasure that he now undertook the task incumbent upon him, as Attorney-General, of crushing his victim. Of the result he had no doubt, and indeed, so far as it was possible, without absolutely overriding the law itself, he had taken every precaution before the trial commenced to secure a conviction. In fact, with Judge Downes on the bench, and a well-packed jury of Orangemen,

there could hardly be any reasonable doubt as to what the result would be. But this was not to prove an ordinary trial. On both sides there was a formidable array of counsel, but the defence rested practically with O'Connell, as the prosecution with the Attorney-General. Both Magee and O'Connell knew that unless a miracle was worked a conviction was absolutely certain. To conciliate the jury was merely wasted energy, but the opportunity of attacking the Attorney-General, and through him the government, whose mouthpiece he was, and of vindicating the Catholic claims, was one not to be lost. The trial began on 26th July, and lasted two days. Each day, long before the hour when Chief-Justice Downes took his seat, the Court of King's Bench was crowded to suffocation. It was shortly after eleven o'clock on the second day that O'Connell rose to address the jury.

He had, he said, consented to the adjournment the previous day out of a natural impulse to postpone a painful duty. Still he did not regret the delay. The farrago of helpless absurdity with which the Attorney-General had regaled them, and which yesterday had roused his resentment and disgust, now only moved him to contempt. In that discourse—a confused and disjointed tissue of bigotry amalgamated with congenial vulgarity—the Attorney-General accused his client of using Billingsgate, and he accused him of it in language suited exclusively for that meridian. It was, indeed, astonishing how he could have preserved that dialect in all its native purity, seeing that for thirty

years he had had the honour to belong to the Irish Bar—to that Bar at which he must have listened to a Burston, a Ponsonby, and a Curran; which still contained a Plunket, a Ball, and, despite of politics, he would add a Bushe. But, dismissing the style, he would ask their attention to the matter of the Attorney-General's discourse. The matter he would divide into two parts: the first, and by far the larger portion, relating to topics wholly irrelevant to the prosecution, the second, and infinitely smaller, relating to the subject matter of the indictment they were called upon to try.

The extraneous part of his discourse, in which he had touched upon, and disfigured, a variety of topics, was distinguished by two leading features—a dull and reproving sermon on the way in which the defence was being conducted, and a political diatribe against the Catholics. For the first, he would tell the Attorney-General that he and his colleagues could cheerfully afford to pardon the vain presumption that made him offer them *his* counsel. For the rest, he had made it the rigid rule of his professional conduct never to mingle his politics with his forensic duties, and if in the present instance he appeared to be departing from this rule, he would remind the jury that he was compelled to follow the Attorney-General into grounds which, had he been wise, he would carefully have avoided. It was possible he might have misunderstood the Attorney-General, for there was, he knew, no relying on his words for what he meant. But, as he gathered from his words, he had talked of the Catholics having imbibed principles

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of a seditious, treasonable, and revolutionary nature. It was impossible to refute such charges in the language of dignity and temper; but he was a profligate liar who so asserted, knowing, as he must do, that the whole tenor of their conduct confuted the assertion. For what was it they sought?

"Pray, Mr. O'Connell," interrupted the Chief Justice at this point, "pray, what can this have to do with the question the jury are to try?"

"My lord," replied O'Connell, "you heard the Attorney-General traduce and calumniate us. You heard him with patience and with temper. Listen now to our vindication."

What was it, he asked, that they, the Catholics, sought? What was it that they incessantly and even clamorously petitioned for? Why, to be allowed to partake of the advantages of the constitution. It was said they wished to destroy it. Would they, if they wished to overturn it, exert themselves, through calumny and in peril, to obtain a portion of its blessings? Strange, inconsistent voice of calumny! The Attorney-General—"that wisest and best of men," as his colleague the Solicitor-General called him in his presence—the Attorney-General boasted of his triumph over Pope and popery. "I have put down the Catholic Committee," said he; "I will put down, at my own good time, the Catholic Board." The boast was partly historical, partly prophetical. He was wrong in his history, and mistaken in his prophecy. He did not put down the Catholic Committee. We ourselves gave up that name the moment that it was confessed that the Attorney-General's

polemico-legal controversy had dwindled into a mere dispute about words. He told us that in the English language "pretence" meant "purpose." Had it been French, we might have ventured to respect his judgment; but in point of English we presumed to differ with him. We told him "purpose," good Mr. Attorney-General, is just the reverse of "pretence." The quarrel grew warm and animated. We appealed to common-sense, to the grammar, and to the dictionary. Common-sense, grammar, and the dictionary decided in our favour. He brought his appeal to this court, and his lordship and your brethren, gentlemen of the jury, decided that in point of law "pretence" does mean "purpose."

Next "this wisest and best of men" glorifies himself in the prospect of pulling down the Catholic Board. For the present, indeed, he tells you that, much as he hates the Papists, it is unnecessary for him to crush our Board, because it serves only to damage their cause. He expresses the very idea of the Roman Domitian, who amused his days by torturing men, his evenings by impaling flies. "Fool," said he, to a courtier that caught a fly for his amusement—"fool, to give thyself so much trouble: seest thou not that it was about to burn itself to death in the candle?" "Oh! rare Attorney-General! Oh! best and wisest of men! Illegal violence, it is true, may put down the Board; force may effectuate it; but your hopes and his will be defeated if he attempts it by any course of law. His religious prejudices obscure his reason. I tell him he knows not the law if he thinks as he says; and if he thinks so,

I tell him, to his beard, that he is not honest in not having sooner prosecuted us, and I challenge him to that prosecution."

But, to come to the subject of the indictment. The libel of which his client was charged was not a libel against the Duke of Richmond in his private capacity; it was not a seditious libel; and it was not alleged to be false. He would trouble them with a few reflections on the law of libel. It was deeply to be lamented that the art of printing was unknown at an earlier period of history. If at the time when the barons wrung the Magna Charta—that simple but sublime charter of liberty—from a timid and perfidious sovereign the press had existed, it would surely have been the first care of those friends of freedom to have established a principle of liberty for it to rest upon which might resist every future assault. Their simple and unsophisticated understandings could never have been brought to comprehend the legal subtleties by which it was argued that falsehood is useful and innocent, and truth, the emanation and the type of heaven, a crime. Unfortunately, when the art of printing had been invented, its value to every sufferer, its terror to every oppressor, was soon obvious, and means were speedily adopted to prevent its salutary effects. The Star Chamber was either created, or at least enlarged and brought into activity. It was particularly vigilant over the infant struggles of the press. A code of laws became necessary to govern the new enemy to prejudice and oppression. For this purpose it adopted the civil law, the law of Rome, not the law at the period of her

liberty and glory, but the law which was promulgated when she fell into slavery and disgrace, and recognised the principle that the will of the prince was the rule of law. From the Star Chamber the prevention and punishment of libels descended to the courts of common law, and with the power they seemed to have inherited much of the spirit of that tribunal. Servility at the bar and profligacy on the bench had not been wanting to aid every construction unfavourable to freedom, and at length it was taken as granted, and as clear law, that truth and falsehood were quite immaterial circumstances, constituting no part of either guilt or innocence. It was a revolting doctrine, and though his own opinion carried little weight, he would say that in the discussion of public subjects and of the administration of public men truth was a duty and not a crime.

Such a discussion was the alleged libel against the Duke of Richmond, which they were to consider sentence by sentence. The Attorney-General had attached much importance to the following paragraph :

"If the administration of the Duke of Richmond had been conducted with more than ordinary talent, its errors might in some degree have been atoned for by its ability, and the people of Ireland, though they might have much to regret, yet would have something to admire ; but truly, after the gravest consideration, they must find themselves at a loss to discover any striking feature in his Grace's administration that makes it superior to the worst of his predecessors."

He had been told that the mischief lay in the art of the sentence. Why, all that it asserted was that it

was difficult to discover the striking features that distinguished the Duke of Richmond's administration from former bad administrations. In the writer's opinion it was an untalented and silly administration. The view might be false and mistaken, but it was no crime to say so. And if it was true, if it had been a foolish administration, could it be an offence to say so? Was the liberty of the press, about which the Attorney-General had discanted, to be confined to flattery?

"They," that is to say the Duke's predecessors, not the Duke himself, as the Attorney-General ludicrously asserted, "they insulted, they oppressed, they murdered, and they deceived." Was not this a mere statement of historical facts? He would refer them to Leland and Hume. How had these historians spoken of the conduct of the Earl of Essex towards Phelim O'Neill, of Lord Grey towards the garrison at Smerwick, of Strafford in the matter of the defective titles? Had the publishers of Leland and Hume been prosecuted for libel? Was his client to be convicted for saying of the Duke of Richmond that he had neither great crimes nor great virtues: that he did not murder like Essex and Grey, but also did not render any splendid services like them?

"The profligate, unprincipled Westmoreland." Some of the jury, he noticed, were Bible distributors and suppressors of vice. He would address himself to them. What would they call profligacy? Suppose the peerage was exposed to sale, set up at open auction at a time when it was a judicial office;

if pensions were multiplied beyond bounds and beyond example; if places were augmented until invention was exhausted, and these were subdivided and split into halves so that two might take the emoluments of each and no person do the duty; if these acts were resorted to in order to corrupt their representatives, would they, the gentle suppressors of vice, call that profligacy? If the father of children selected in the open day his guilty paramour; if the wedded mother of children displayed her crime unblushingly; if the assent of the titled or untitled wittol to his own shame was purchased with the people's money; if these scenes were enacted in the open day, would sweet distributors of Bibles call that profligacy? If not, then let them convict John Magee because he published that Westmoreland was profligate and unprincipled as a Lord-Lieutenant, and then return to their distribution of Bibles and their attacks upon the recreations of the poor under the name of vices.

"The cold-hearted and cruel Camden." Ah! he knew he had their prejudices against him, for it was under Camden's administration that their faction had been cherished and strengthened. Still, he would say the cold and cruel Camden. On one circuit during his administration there were one hundred individuals tried before one judge: of these ninety-eight were capitally convicted and ninety-seven hanged. One only escaped; but he was a soldier, who had murdered a peasant or done something equally trivial. Had they ever heard of Abercromby, the valiant and good, of Moore, the soldier and scholar—the soul of reason

and the heart of pity? Both were in Ireland under Camden, both had recorded their opinion of his administration. Let them on their oaths dare to contradict Abercromby and they would convict not his client but themselves of the foul crime of perjury.

"The artful and treacherous Cornwallis." Was it, he asked, necessary to prove that the Union was effectuated by artifice and treachery? He would refer them to the Attorney-General, at that time plain William Saurin. In 1800 Mr. Saurin was charged with being a Jacobin on much the same lines, and with as much truth as he now applied it to his client. His reply would serve for that of Mr. Magee. "Mr. Saurin," said the *Anti-Union* of 22d March, 1800, "admitted that debates might sometimes produce agitations, but that was the price necessarily paid for liberty." Oh! how he thanked the good Jew for that word. Yes, agitation was the price paid for liberty. The Catholics had paid the price, and the honest man refused to give them the goods. In 1800 Mr. Saurin had preached the holy doctrine of insurrection; he had sounded the tocsin of resistance, and summoned the people of the land to battle against the Union as against usurpation: in 1813 he indicted a man and called him a ruffian for speaking of the Union, not as usurpers, but as artful and treacherous men! He besought the jury to pity the situation in which the Attorney-General had placed himself, and not to think of punishing Mr. Magee for his moderation.

But it was said that his client had libelled the King by imputing to him the selection of improper

and criminal chief governors. What was this but the very acme of servile doctrine? The constitution declared that the King could do no wrong and that even for his personal acts his servants were personally responsible. The Attorney-General had reversed the constitution, though as a matter of fact there was not one word in the alleged libel that referred to his Majesty.

But to pass on. Mr. Magee had published that the Duke of Richmond

"came over ignorant; he soon became prejudiced, and then he became intemperate. . . . His original character for moderation he has forfeited. . . . He has begun to act; he has ceased to be a dispassionate chief governor. . . . He descends; he mixes with the throng; he becomes personally engaged, and having lost his temper calls forth his private passions to support his public principles; he is no longer an indifferent Viceroy, but a frightful partisan of an English ministry, whose base passions he indulges, whose unworthy resentments he gratifies, and on whose behalf he at present canvasses."

Well! was it not perfectly true? Had not his Grace canvassed on behalf of the ministry? Was there a titled or untitled servant of the Castle who had not been despatched to the south to vote against the popular and for the ministerial candidate? Was there a single individual within his Grace's reach that did not vote against Prittie and Matthew in Tipperary and against Hutchinson in Cork? He would not read to them how Mr. Hutchinson had treated the partisanship of the Lord-Lieutenant,

lest it might be supposed that he identified his client with the violent but merited reprobation poured out by him upon the scandalous interference of government in these elections. Would the Attorney-General, or his colleague the Solicitor-General, attempt to deny the Duke of Richmond's interference in these elections? It was as notorious as the sun at noon-day. For himself, he would say that he who used the influence of the executive to control the choice of the representatives of the people violated the first principles of the constitution; he was guilty of political sacrilege, and profaned the very sanctuary of the people's rights and liberties, and if he should be called a partisan it was only because some harsher and more appropriate term ought to be applied to his delinquency.

The Attorney-General had boasted of his conviction of Mr. Kirwan. He had gloried in having got together a jury more subservient than in Dr. Sheridan's case. "*Me, me, adsum qui feci,*" he had exclaimed in rapture; he forgot to add "*mea fraus omnis.*" Had he succeeded likewise in the present case? The jury had been shown the publication for which his client was being tried; he would read them a paragraph in a newspaper, the publisher of which the Attorney-General refused to prosecute for libel:—"Ballybay, 4th July, 1813. A meeting of the Orange lodges was agreed on, in consequence of the manner in which the Catholics wished to have persecuted the loyalists in this country last year, when they even murdered some of them for no other reason than their being yeomen and Protestants."

The paragraph made his blood boil. There had been several murders committed in the county Monaghan, in which Ballybay lay. The persons killed were Roman Catholics; their murderers were Orangemen. Several of the persons accused of these murders were to be tried at the ensuing assizes. The obvious intention of that and similar paragraphs was to create a prejudice favourable to the murderers. The Attorney-General was waited on; he was respectfully requested to prosecute the publishers of the newspaper upon the terms of having the falsehood of these assertions first proved to him. He refused. The two proprietors of the newspaper, the *Hibernian Journal*, had each a pension of £400 per annum, for supporting government, as it was called, in addition to proclamations and public advertisements!

"Would," exclaimed O'Connell, turning round to where Peel, the Chief Secretary, was sitting, "would that I could see the man who pays the proclamation money and these pensions! I would ask him whether this was a paper that ought to receive the money of the Irish people. Whether this was the legitimate use of the public purse." Let them contrast the position of Mr. Magee with that of the proprietors of the *Hibernian Journal;* the one prosecuted with all the weight and influence of the Crown, the other pensioned by the minister of the Crown; the one dragged to the bar for the sober discussion of political topics, the other hired to disseminate the most horrid calumnies. Were they going to convict Mr. Magee? Was there amongst them one friend to

freedom? There were amongst them men of great religious zeal, of much public piety. Were they sincere? Did they believe what they professed? With all their zeal, with all their piety, was there a conscience amongst them? If they were sincere; if they had a conscience, Mr. Magee confidently expected an acquittal. But if they were not, if they were slaves and hypocrites, he would await their verdict and despise it.

Such in meagre outlines was the speech, which it took O'Connell four hours to deliver—the greatest perhaps of all his forensic efforts. Into those four brief hours he poured the agony and indignation of a lifetime. It was the first time that it had been given him to get the enemies of his faith and of his country before him, and force them against their will to listen to his scathing criticism of the principles that had regulated and still continued to regulate the government of Ireland. He had told them the truth to their faces; he had torn the hollow mask of piety from them, and revealed them to the world as hypocrites in religion, bankrupts in principle, corruptors of public morality, violators of the constitution, political assassins to whom government meant the preservation of iniquitous privileges for the few and the oppression of the many. And his words had gone home to the Judge, the Jury, the Attorney-General and the government as represented by the Chief Secretary. If Magee had been guilty of publishing a libel, O'Connell, as Peel said, had uttered one even more atrocious. The price to be paid for it would, no doubt, be a big one.

The jury returned a verdict of guilty against Magee; but judgment was postponed till November. In the interval O'Connell's speech was published in pamphlet form, and so great was the interest created by it that ten thousand copies were disposed of on the day of publication. It was translated into French and Spanish, and a copy in the latter language presented, it is said, to every member of the Cortes. There was therefore little matter for wonder that when Magee was called up for judgment, on 27th November, the Attorney-General should have urged the publication of the speech and Magee's approval of it as an aggravation of his original offence. He was still smarting under the recollection of O'Connell's remorseless sarcasm, and in stating his case he alluded to the language in which he had been addressed as the grossest outrage to public decency that had occurred within the memory of man. For could it, he asked, be for a moment supposed that it was the right or privilege of a criminal brought to trial to waive his own defence, and to turn the indictment into an arraignment, an accusation, and an attack upon the character of the prosecutor, and that prosecutor the public officer of the law, whose duty it was to prosecute his crime? For, supposing the criminal should be able to find in his counsel an accomplice of his crime, surely it could not be contended that the counsel of that criminal could derive any privilege from his own criminality. It was an unfortunate expression if he did not mean to refer to O'Connell as a participator in Magee's criminality. Anyhow, O'Connell at once construed it in that sense,

and, rising to reply, he said the Attorney-General had done well to treasure up his resentment since July in order to give utterance to it in a place which prevented him administering the chastisement he deserved.

"Eh! what is that you say?" interrupted Justice Daly.

"Take care what you say, sir!" exclaimed Justice Osborne. "I warn you, I will not sit here and listen to such a speech as that which I have seen reported."

"Chastising the Attorney-General!" added Justice Daly. "If a criminal information was applied for on that word, we should be bound to grant it."

"My lords," said O'Connell, "I meant that elsewhere thus assailed I should be carried away by my feelings to do that which I should regret—to go beyond the law—to inflict corporal punishment for that offence, which I am here ready, out of consideration for the court, to pardon."

"I will take the opinion of the court," retorted Justice Osborne, "whether you shall not be committed."

"Now, Mr. O'Connell," interposed Justice Day, pouring oil on the troubled surface, "do you not perceive that, while you talk of suppressing those feelings, you are actually indulging them? The Attorney-General could not mean you offence in the line of argument he pursued to enhance the punishment of your client. It is unnecessary to throw off or to repel aspersions that are not made."

"My lord," replied O'Connell, "I thank you. . . . But what did the Attorney-General mean when he

imputed to the advocate participation in the crime of the client?"

"We did not," said Justice Osborne, "understand him to refer to you."

"I did not, my lords," the Attorney-General assured the court. "I certainly did not mean the gentleman. To state that I did would be to misrepresent my meaning, which had nothing to do with him."

The admission put an end to the controversy; but it did not prevent O'Connell, under colour of a legal argument to show why the matter stated for aggravation ought not to be allowed to affect his client, from giving full vent to his indignation at the Attorney-General's attempt to bridle the independent opposition of the Bar. And, indeed, so far as the prosecution rested on political grounds, there can hardly be any question that his attitude was sound in principle. But the violence of his language, the open sarcasms he levelled at the impartiality of the Bench, were hardly calculated to improve the case of his client, and Magee, whose courage had been damped by confinement in Kilmainham, without consulting him instructed another of his counsel to disavow his speech. The Attorney-General, however, refused to dissociate the client from his counsel, and Magee was condemned to pay a fine of £500, to go to prison for two years, and to find security for his subsequent good behaviour, himself in £1000 and two others, each in £500.

Magee's conduct greatly distressed O'Connell, not merely on personal grounds, though it was mortification enough to have been disowned in public court,

THE KILMAINHAM JAIL.

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but more because of its probable effects on the Catholic cause, as likely to increase "dissension amongst the few who remain devoted in intention and design, at least, to the unfortunate land of our birth." That the Catholics had suffered a serious reverse was certain, and the ill-feeling to which O'Connell's stubborn opposition to the veto had given rise was intensified by what was openly spoken of as his mismanagement of Magee's case. So strongly, indeed, did the current run against him, that his friends felt it necessary to rally round him, and in order to show their unabated confidence in his leadership, to present him with a service of plate of the value of a thousand guineas. In making the presentation, John Finlay, a Protestant barrister, and an ardent friend of the Catholics, referred in eulogistic terms to O'Connell's unselfish devotion to the cause of his fellow-countrymen, his unwearying activity in their service, his consummate ability, and his undaunted courage in repelling the attacks of government on the independence of the Bar and the liberty of the press. Power had attempted to put him down; it was their duty to support him. It had been said, and said with great truth, that no man had ever yoked his fortunes to the fate of Ireland who had not been ruined by the connection. It was their interest to uphold him—"a man spotless in the relations of private life, matchless in the duties of private friendship, beloved by every man who knows him, and esteemed by all who have not a prejudice or an interest in disliking him."

Adapting Scott's lines, he would say—

"Let him but stand, in spite of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower;
His thrilling trump will rouse the land
When fraud or danger is at hand;
By him, as by a beacon light,
The pilot must keep course aright."

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CHAPTER V.

DUELS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.

1814–1820.

MEANWHILE the battle of the Securities continued to drag on its weary length. Both sides, vetoists and anti-vetoists, had appealed to the Pope, and early in the following year, 1814, came the papal answer in the shape of a rescript signed by the Vice-Prefect of the Propaganda, Monsignor Quarantotti, sanctioning the very Securities which the Irish episcopacy had pronounced to be incompatible with the discipline of the Roman Catholic Church. The vetoists were jubilant at the result; the anti-vetoists depressed beyond measure. "Is it true, sir," asked his servant of an old parish priest, "that the Pope has turned Orangeman?" What, indeed, could one think, now that the Pope himself seemed to have deserted them and gone over to the enemy? But the feeling of depression, if acute, was short-lived. On examination, it was found that at the date affixed to Quarantotti's rescript, 16th February, 1814, the Pope, Pius VII., was still a prisoner in the hands of Napoleon at

Fontainebleau. The discovery pointed a way out of the dilemma. What right, it was asked, had a mere clerk of the Propaganda to settle a matter of such grave importance on his own account? They had appealed to the Pope, not to his secretary; the Pope's signature was wanting, and in refusing to regard the rescript as mandatory, the Irish Catholics could not be charged with disobedience; but there was a strong feeling abroad that, even in the event of the Pope assenting to the Securities, the Irish would be justified, on national grounds, in disobeying him.

"If the Pope himself," exclaimed Purcell O'Gorman, at a meeting of Catholics on 19th May, "with all his cardinals in full council, issued a bull to the effect of the rescript, I should not obey it." When the cheers that greeted his words had died away, he added, "I suppose I should thereby cease to be a Catholic?" "No, no!" shouted Doctor Droomgoole, the Duigenan of the Catholic party. "I am glad," resumed O'Gorman,—"I am glad that I may resist the Pope and Council and still be a member of the Catholic Church." The English Catholics might do as they liked; but it was clear that in Ireland matters had reached a point when it might prove dangerous for the papacy to conspire further with the English ministry in trying to curtail the independence of the Irish clergy. Nor were the clergy themselves backward in asserting their national rights. After a two days' conference at Maynooth, the bishops, on 27th May, unanimously resolved that, having taken into their mature

consideration the late rescript of the Vice-Prefect of the Propaganda, they were fully convinced that it was not mandatory.

As for O'Connell, there was no doubt as to his opinion on the subject. He was, he prided himself, a Catholic from conviction; but had he been a Protestant or a Presbyterian his objection to papal interference in a matter of national importance could not have been more determined. "I am," said he, "sincerely a Catholic; but I am not a Papist, and I deny the doctrine that the Pope has any temporal authority, directly or indirectly, in Ireland." He would not believe that any of their venerated prelates could fail in their duty; but should they descend from their high station to become the vile slaves of the clerks of the Castle, he would warn them betimes to look to their masters for their support; for the people would despise them, and would communicate only with some holy priest who had never bowed to the Dagon of power. This was plain speaking with a vengeance, and it did not fail to produce a salutary effect on the counsels of the papacy. At the same time, however, it exasperated those friends of Catholic emancipation in Parliament who regarded the Securities as a harmless and necessary concession to Protestant feeling in England, and on presenting the Catholic petition, on 24th May, Grattan announced that it was not his intention to discuss its merits that session or to move any resolution based upon it. For this decision he offered no explanation; it was, as O'Connell indignantly remarked, a barefaced "*stet pro ratione voluntas.*" Of

course it was impossible to overlook his conduct, and a meeting of the Catholic Board was hastily summoned to consider the unexpected event, and to decide on what steps it was necessary, under the circumstances, to take. The hour of meeting had arrived, and O'Connell was about to open the business when a messenger from the Castle hastily entered the room, holding in his hand a Government proclamation ordering the immediate dissolution of the Board.

The Attorney-General had done as he promised he would do, and crushed the Board at his own good time. He could not have found a more favourable opportunity for his purpose. As O'Connell and his handful of faithful adherents strolled up to his house in Merrion Square to make arrangements for calling together an aggregate meeting to discuss the situation, the prospect that confronted them was gloomy in the extreme. Never, indeed, in the whole course of the agitation had the situation seemed more hopeless than it did at this moment. Distracted by their own internal dissensions, disowned by their Protestant supporters in Parliament, out-tricked at Rome itself, robbed of the advocacy of the press, and now, by the suppression of the Board, deprived of their last means of constitutional agitation, the Catholics might well seem an object of derision to their enemies, and O'Connell's heart might well sink within him as he read his own misery in the faces of the few friends that still clung to him. Would emancipation never be achieved? Often and often did he ask himself the question, and the answer

was not always satisfactory even to his sanguine nature.

Nevertheless, depressed and discouraged though he was, he showed no outward sign of hesitation, and his language in public was as hopeful as ever. His very presence inspired confidence. Never, not even in the great hour of triumph that awaited him, was he more deserving of the admiration and love of his countrymen than in the dark years that elapsed between the suppression of the Board and the foundation of the Association. And it was with a feeling of justifiable pride that he afterwards recalled how, at a period when his minutes counted by the guinea, when his emoluments were limited only by the extent of his physical and waking powers, when his meals were shortened to the narrowest space, and his sleep restricted to the earliest hours before the dawn — at that period, and for more than twenty years — there was no day that he did not devote one to two hours, often much more, to the working out of the Catholic cause, and that without receiving or allowing the offer of any remuneration even for the personal expenditure incurred in the agitation of the cause itself; and how for four years he bore the entire expenses of the Catholic agitation without receiving the contribution of others to a greater amount than £74 in the whole.

Grattan's refusal to advocate the Catholic claims had the disastrous effect of stimulating the exertions of their opponents, and among several petitions presented to Parliament hostile to their claims was one emanating from the corporation of Dublin. The

fact irritated O'Connell, and at a meeting of Catholics in January of the following year, 1815, he alluded to the loss they had sustained by not having the subject discussed the previous session in Parliament, adding that had it been otherwise they would not then have seen "the beggarly corporation of Dublin" anticipating their efforts by a petition of an opposite tendency. The expression, one would have thought, was harmless enough, and it is hard to conceive why an individual member of the corporation should have regarded it as personally applying to himself. Yet this was precisely what one of them, a Mr. D'Esterre, did. D'Esterre was a wholesale provision dealer in Bachelor's Walk and a representative of the guild of merchants. In early life he had served as a petty officer in the fleet, and by his courageous behaviour during the mutiny at the Nore had acquired for himself a considerable reputation for personal bravery. Moreover he was a man of liberal sentiments, and had on more than one occasion urged on his fellows of the corporation the adoption of a more conciliatory attitude towards the Roman Catholics, having even, it is said, opposed the very petition which now raised O'Connell's ire. Unfortunately he was in rather embarrassed circumstances, and either because he hoped to improve his position by attacking a man personally objectionable to Government, or because in his sensitiveness to his position he fell an easy victim to the insinuations of more unscrupulous men, he thought proper to resent O'Connell's words as a direct attack on himself.

O'Connell's surprise on opening D'Esterre's letter

requiring a retractation or explanation of the offensive expression may be more easily imagined than described. Retractation was of course out of the question, and all that he felt it incumbent on him to say by way of explanation was that, while the corporation doubtless contained many estimable individuals, the conduct of the corporation itself was so notoriously hostile to the Catholics that their private opinions must necessarily be confounded in the acts of the general body. This explanation did not satisfy D'Esterre; but instead of taking the course usual in such cases he despatched another letter, which, however, O'Connell returned unread. This was on Friday, 27th January. Three days elapsed without D'Esterre's taking any further step; but on Tuesday a rumour got abroad that he was going to horsewhip O'Connell. The whole town was excited over the affair, especially when it turned out that D'Esterre had actually appeared in the Four Courts with a whip in his hand, but had failed to find O'Connell. As for the latter, he continued to go about his business as usual, though attended by a large concourse of well-wishers determined to see fair play on D'Esterre's part. The comedy lasted the whole day; but in the evening Justice Day interfered in his magisterial capacity, and exacted a promise from O'Connell that he would on no account be the aggressor. Early next morning, however, Sir Edward Stanley, acting as D'Esterre's friend, called on O'Connell, and was by him referred to Major MacNamara, who promptly fixed the hour of meeting for half-past three o'clock that afternoon.

The snow was falling slightly as O'Connell and his friends rolled out of Dublin on their way to the appointed place of meeting at Bishop's Court, about twelve miles from the city. They reached the ground precisely at three; an hour passed away before D'Esterre and his friends arrived, and forty minutes more elapsed before the combatants were placed in position. In the interval D'Esterre took occasion to say that his quarrel with O'Connell was not of a religious nature, and that he had no animosity whatever against the Catholics or their leaders. Both he and O'Connell appeared cool and collected. Each was provided with a case of pistols to use at discretion. D'Esterre fired first, but the click of O'Connell's pistol followed almost instantly, and D'Esterre was seen to fall to the ground. Medical attendance was at hand, and, honour having been satisfied, O'Connell and his friends withdrew. Meanwhile, it had been rumoured in Dublin that O'Connell had been killed, and fears being entertained lest the mob might exact personal vengeance on D'Esterre, a body of cavalry was hastily despatched to the spot. When the truth became known, it caused a tremendous revulsion of feeling; the joy of the populace was unbounded, bonfires were lighted in the streets and continued blazing till midnight.

D'Esterre's wound was not at first expected to prove fatal. But on returning home O'Connell betrayed great uneasiness as to his fate. "I fear he is dead," he remarked; "but I fired low, and the ball must have entered near the thigh." His apprehen-

sions were verified. Next day D'Esterre expired in great agony. The sad issue of the duel greatly distressed O'Connell, and anticipating legal proceedings he retained Richard, afterwards Baron, Pennefather, to defend him; but the courtesy of the dead man's friends relieved him from anxiety in that respect. He himself was equal in generosity, and knowing that the death of her husband had plunged Mrs. D'Esterre in poverty, he offered to settle a handsome annuity on her, or rather, as he himself said, "to share his income with her." The offer was declined, but he prevailed on a daughter of the deceased to accept an annuity from him, which was regularly paid till his death, and at a later period he had the satisfaction of rendering valuable legal service to the widow herself. But time strengthened rather than diminished the remorse he felt for D'Esterre's fate, and the recollection of it is said, by those who knew him best, to have cast a shadow over his whole subsequent life. From that time forward people noticed that whenever he had occasion to pass D'Esterre's house in Bachelor's Walk he would raise his hat and move his lips in silent prayer. Subsequently he became so impressed with the wickedness as well as the folly of duelling as to register a vow never to fight another. From this resolve no reflection on his personal courage could ever move him, and there can be little doubt that his example did much to discourage the practice amongst public men.

At the time, however, though greatly distressed at what had happened, he had come to no such resolution, and he had hardly emerged from his affair of

honour with D'Esterre than he became involved in another with Peel. Robert Peel was Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. He was barely twenty-seven years old, and still retained much of that extreme sensitiveness which, when a schoolboy, had driven him a mile out of his way rather than encounter the rude jests of the Bury lads. His appointment to the Irish secretaryship in 1812 he owed to Lord Liverpool, who had been so favourably impressed by his speech in defence of the Walcheren expedition as to make him his private secretary. In recommending him to the then Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Richmond, Liverpool, after referring to the official experience he had acquired during the two years he had served under him in the Secretary of State's office, dwelt on his academic attainments, his good temper, great frankness, and openness of manners as likely to render his appointment both acceptable and advantageous to the Irish government. That one so young should, after having served so limited an apprenticeship, and with no more knowledge of Ireland than he derived from the fact that he happened by an accident to represent the borough of Cashel, have been judged capable of filling so responsible an office as that of Chief Secretary speaks volumes for the contemptuous disregard with which Ireland was treated by English statesmen during the early years of the Union. True, Pitt had become Prime Minister of England at an equally early age; but men had laughed derisively and not altogether without reason at the appointment. How would they have laughed had Peel been made either Secretary of War or First

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Lord of the Treasury! But Chief Secretary for Ireland—that was a post for which the most mediocre talents only were required. In England mistakes and incompetency counted for something. In Ireland it was otherwise. Ireland had ever been the country of experiments, and there a man might try his 'prentice hand in the art of statesmanship without fear of censure or of risking his future career.

So at least it seemed to O'Connell, and in the bitterness of his resentment at the slight placed on his country he seldom, as we have seen, lost an opportunity of venting his spleen on Peel. Nothing, indeed, could excuse the intemperateness of his language except the fact that he saw in Peel opposition to the most elementary liberties of his country personified. His sneers and sarcasms no doubt went home; but the haughty indifference with which the Chief Secretary met them galled him to madness. A report that Peel had spoken derogatorily of him in the House of Commons filled his cup of indignation to overflowing, and at an aggregate meeting on 29th August he retaliated by saying:

"I am told he has in my absence, and in a place where he was privileged from any account, grossly traduced me. I said at the last meeting, and in the presence of the note-takers of the police, who are paid by him, that he was too prudent to attack me in my presence. I see the same police informers here now, and I authorise them carefully to report these my words: that Mr. Peel would not dare, in my presence and in any place where he was liable to personal account, to use a single expression derogatory to my interest or my honour."

The attack was too direct to be overlooked by Peel, and the following day Sir Charles Saxton, at his request, waited on O'Connell for an explanation. Being satisfied that no legal prosecution was intended, O'Connell admitted that he had been accurately reported, whereupon Saxton stated that he was authorised to say that Peel had said nothing in his speeches concerning him which he did not unequivocally avow and hold himself responsible for. "In that case," replied O'Connell, "I consider it incumbent on me to send a friend to Mr. Peel." But the friend chosen by him, Mr. George Lidwill, a Protestant gentleman and a noted duellist, did not happen to take the same view of the situation as his principal, and having in the course of an interview with Sir Charles Saxton elicited the important fact that Peel had never in his speeches in Parliament spoken disrespectfully of O'Connell, he gave it as his opinion that, as the insult had originated with the latter he could not likewise be the challenger. Saxton reminded him that this was not O'Connell's opinion; but Lidwill was not to be moved from his position, and declared that if O'Connell insisted on sending a message to Peel he must decline to act in the matter.

It thus happened that, while both parties waited for a message, no message was sent by either, and Saxton, supposing that O'Connell was trying to slip out of the business, sent an account of the affair to Saturday evening's *Correspondent*. When O'Connell, in turning over the paper, came across this letter his indignation passed all bounds, and sitting down he penned a most abusive letter to *Carrick's Post*,

directly charging Peel and Saxton with resorting to "a paltry trick," and with having "ultimately preferred a paper war." His letter, of course, brought matters to a crisis, and an hour or two after its appearance came a politely worded request from the Chief Secretary to appoint a friend to make arrangements with Colonel Brown for an early meeting. Lidwill having in the meanwhile become personally involved with Saxton, O'Connell turned to his old friend, Richard Newton Bennett. But the reports in the newspapers had by this time so alarmed Mrs. O'Connell that, fearing for her husband's life, she sent privately, after he had retired to rest, to the sheriff, who, returning with two police officers, gave him then and there into custody with instructions to remain in his bedroom all night. Almost at the same time Lidwill was placed under arrest, and both he and O'Connell bound over in heavy penalties to keep the peace.

O'Connell's position was now an extremely disagreeable one, especially as the papers had taken the matter up, and were keenly discussing the relative merits of him and Peel. A meeting in Ireland being out of the question, it was arranged that they should proceed by different routes to the continent and settle their difference abroad. Ostend was named as the place of rendezvous, and Peel, setting off at once, had already been there several days, practising, Irish imagination had it, at an ace of hearts, when the news reached him that O'Connell had been arrested in London. The arrest this time was at the instance of James Becket, Under-Secretary of State, a friend

of Peel's, and O'Connell, bound over in heavy penalties to keep the peace, returned to Ireland. It was a wholly unsatisfactory conclusion to a wholly unsatisfactory affair. The original offender had been O'Connell himself, but the responsibility of pushing matters to extremities must rest entirely with Saxton. He and Lidwill met on the continent and exchanged shots, the latter firing in the air, saying that he had no personal grievance against his opponent.

Ten years later, when emancipation seemed likely to be conceded by Parliament, O'Connell, in order to conciliate Peel, tendered him an apology through Bennett. In acknowledging it, Peel said that time and the consciousness that he had done all in his power to procure honourable reparation "had removed all feelings of personal hostility and resentment, to which a deep sense of injury might at first have given rise. Had any such feelings survived, the intention of Mr. O'Connell in making the communication which he had recently made could not have failed completely to have extinguished them." It was an honourable and manly step on O'Connell's part; but when the fact leaked out, public opinion in Ireland charged him with "crouching" to the most implacable and dangerous enemy of the Catholic cause. To this charge O'Connell replied:

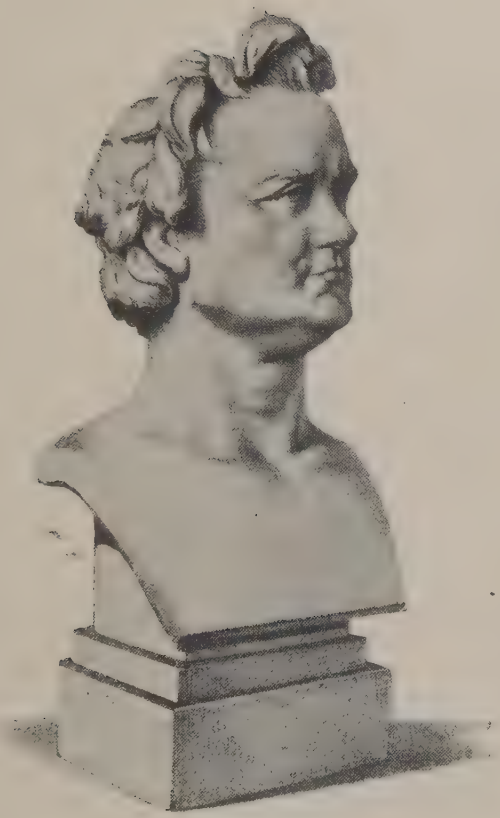
"There was, I know it well, personal humiliation in taking such a step. But is not this a subject upon which I merit humiliation? Yes, let me be sneered at and let me be censured, even by the generous and respected; I do not shrink from this humiliation. He who feels

conscious of having outraged the law of God ought to feel a pleasure in the avowal of his deep and lasting regret."

Meanwhile, to revert to public affairs, the aggregate meeting, which had been called to consider the situation into which the affairs of the Catholics had been thrown by the refusal of Grattan to advocate their claims, and the dissolution of the Catholic Board, met on 11th June, 1814, and passed certain formal resolutions. But the attendance was thin, and the prevailing air was one of apathy and indifference. Indeed, so long as the Securities question remained unsettled it was hopeless to look for any decided action. So far as Quarantotti's rescript was concerned, the remonstrance of the Irish episcopacy had been successful in inducing the Pope to recall it; but what direction his Holiness's final decision might take it was impossible to predict. The question of petitioning Parliament in the following session did something, however, to stir the smouldering ashes into a feeble flame. At a meeting in Lord Fingal's drawing room, on 10th January, 1815, Richard Lalor Sheil, rising into fame as a dramatic writer and the one eloquent mouthpiece of the vetoists, submitted a well-written petition. The only objection to it was that it was too servile in tone, and held out a hope of compromise on the Securities difficulty. The influence of O'Connell was sufficient to secure its rejection, and to obtain the appointment of a committee, of which he was one, to frame a suitable petition. But the same difference of opinion manifested itself in the committee as had shown

itself in the meeting, and after a second futile effort at unanimity it was resolved simply that a petition should be presented, leaving it open to discussion what that petition should be and also as to whom it should be offered for presentation. After some hesitation it was agreed to call upon their old friends, Lord Donoughmore and Grattan. The former responded cordially, but the latter would only consent to promote their claims on his own conditions, viz., of qualified emancipation. His attitude was severely censured by O'Connell at an adjourned meeting of Catholics on 15th February. He did not, he declared, dispute or question Grattan's integrity or his high honour; but, humble as he was in talents and station compared with him, he did dispute his judgment and was prepared to demonstrate how mistaken he was.

In the meantime, in order to keep the flame of agitation alive, O'Connell had started a new society having its headquarters in Capel Street, and calling itself the Catholic Association—the precursor of the more famous one of the same name. In founding it every care had been taken to steer clear of the Convention Act. No chair had been taken, no proposition submitted, no instructions offered, no speech delivered; but every gentleman who chose to belong to it entered his name in a book which the secretary held open daily from eleven till three. It was, in effect, the suppressed Board revived under a new name. To this society O'Connell now proposed to assign the task of finding some member of the House of Commons willing to support their claim



RICHARD LALOR SHEIL.

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for unqualified emancipation. Such a member was found in the person of Sir Henry Parnell; but on moving the House to go into committee on the Catholic claims on 31st May he was defeated by a majority of eighty-one.

Clearly nothing was to be hoped for in England or in Ireland until the Securities difficulty had been settled. Acting in this belief O'Connell drew up or inspired a "humble address and remonstrance of the Roman Catholics of Ireland to his Holiness, Pope Pius VII.," embodying the fears, desires, and determinations of the anti-vetoists. Coming from his pen, the address was hardly to be called a "humble" remonstrance; on the contrary, it conveyed to his Holiness, in pretty forcible language, that the Catholics of Ireland would submit to no "interference" on his part, or that "of any other foreign prelate, state, or potentate in the control of our temporal conduct or the arrangement of our political concerns," and concluded with a fervent hope that his Holiness would see his way to gratify his most devoted children in avoiding the machinations of their enemies, "and thereby perpetuate by indissoluble bonds the spiritual connexion, which has been so long maintained between the see of Rome and the Roman Catholics of Ireland,"—otherwise they "would still proceed in the course which practice and persecution. have tried and proved." The memorial was transmitted to Rome, but after a long delay it was finally rejected by the Pope, on the ground that the laity had no business to interfere in matters held to be purely ecclesiastical.

The result might have been expected, considering the paramount influence of Cardinal Gonsalvi in the councils of the papacy. But the miscarriage of the address greatly animated the vetoists, and at a meeting at Lord Trimleston's a petition embodying their views was signed and transmitted to Grattan and Lord Donoughmore for presentation to Parliament. The petition was presented by Grattan on 15th May, 1816, as was also another praying for unconditional emancipation by Sir H. Parnell on behalf of the anti-vetoists, but a proposal to resolve itself into a committee for the consideration of the penal laws was defeated by thirty-one votes. The division was more favourable than that of the preceding year; but circumstances had changed. The banishment of Napoleon, and the restoration of peace to Europe, had introduced a new element into domestic politics. Whatever necessity there might have been so long as the war lasted of conciliating the Catholics, no longer existed. Men were weary of the subject, and were glad of any excuse to let it drop. Nor was the feeling of apathy confined to England. In Ireland vetoists and anti-vetoists were tired of the struggle,—of this constant enacting the part of the Sisyphus, and sank back into hopeless indifference.

To O'Connell it was a period of harassing care and anxiety. He could see for himself that the Catholic peasantry, the bulk of the nation, whose cause he had made his own, showed little interest one way or another. Rent, tithes, taxes—these were the things that concerned them, not emancipation, qualified or unqualified. What mattered it to them whether

Roman Catholics sat in Parliament or not? Roman Catholic landlords were no better than their Protestant neighbours, often even worse. Men of wealth and position might find it to their advantage to sit in Parliament; their priests told them that emancipation was a good thing; but on the whole they did not care a farthing about it, any more than they had done about the Union. A deplorable state of affairs, no doubt; but facts and the ordinary conditions of life are stubborn things. People who have to fight for their daily bread do not get excited over seats in Parliament till seats in Parliament mean something to them individually — higher wages, better living, and less tyranny. Naturally, they shouted themselves hoarse when anyone, especially O'Connell, dilated on their grievances — on the iniquity of the penal laws which excluded them from the full rights of citizenship. But what Irishman, or, for the matter of that, what Englishman, is ever without his grievance, real or imaginary? The wonder is not so much that it took twenty-nine years to obtain emancipation, as that anyone should have been found capable of stirring a nation into enthusiasm over it. For, after all, emancipation was not such a vital question as was the repeal of the corn-laws, for example. That it was a grievance no one can gainsay; but it was a grievance which affected a very limited class only, and might have been as easily redressed in 1800 as it was in 1829. Circumstances rather than his own free choice had driven O'Connell into the fray, but, having taken up his stand, nothing could induce him to withdraw, nothing could damp his

ardour. Victory crowned his devotion in the end at a price which it took half a century to repair. But the balance was on his side, for in the struggle he had called a nation into existence. The victory itself was nothing: the ulterior results everything.

Meantime, he stood alone. Except for himself and the secretary, scarcely anyone troubled the committee rooms in Capel Street with their presence, and having to pay the rent out of his own pocket he moved the Association into less pretentious premises in Crow Street. All this time his business in the law courts had been steadily increasing. But despite his rising income, he was already encumbered with debts of one sort or another, due largely to the fact that very early in his career he had become surety for an insolvent friend, while the expenses of maintaining the agitation pressed heavily upon him. Habitually careless in money matters, money had thus become to him an absolute necessity, and the strain on his working powers was immense. A letter written to him by his wife on 11th April, 1817, during the Cork assizes, is worth quoting:

"My dearest Love," she writes, "I wish to God you could contrive to get out of court for a quarter of an hour during the middle of the day, to take a bowl of soup or a snack of some kind. Surely, though you may not be able to go to a tavern, could not James get anything you wished for from the Bar mess at your lodgings which is merely a step from the Court House? Do, my heart, try to accomplish this: for really, I am quite unhappy to have you fasting from an early hour in the morning until nine or ten o'clock at night. I wish I

was with you, to make you take care of yourself. I am quite sure there is not another barrister on circuit would go through half the fatigue you do without taking necessary nourishment."

That year, 1817, no petition was presented to Parliament. But Grattan, understanding that there was a prospect of uniting parties in Ireland by a quasi-compromise, under the name of "domestic nomination," whereby the Pope's selection to Irish bishoprics was to be restricted to a list of candidates forwarded to him from the prelates of the province and clergy of the vacant diocese, moved the reading of the petition of the previous year, and on 9th May divided the House on the subject of the Catholic claims, when 221 voted for and 245 against the motion to go into committee. The division attracted scarcely any attention in Ireland. However, at an aggregate meeting on 3d July, a resolution was passed to reorganise the Catholic Board, consisting of the members of the former body, the old Catholic Committee, and the short-lived Association. The Board held its first meeting on the 12th, and entered into resolutions for greater activity against the veto and in favour of "domestic nomination." But it proved as helpless as its predecessor to stimulate public opinion, and in view of the anticipated general election, in the summer of the following year, 1818, no petition was framed for presentation to Parliament.

Month after month thus passed idly away: all interest in the subject seemed to have expired. To deepen the general despondency, Ireland was visited

by one of those periodical famines which engrave themselves so deeply in the popular memory as to serve for a starting-point from which to date events, until the remembrance of the former has been obliterated in the recurrence of another similar visitation. The harvest of 1817 had proved an almost total failure. The potato crop, to which nearly half the population looked for its sustenance, had rotted in the ground. What had escaped, the tithe-proctor had seized. Close in the wake of famine came pestilence; and death, in the form of typhus, mowed down the starving peasantry by thousands. Hardly a village in the whole length and breadth of the land escaped its visitation. Crowds of half-naked, emaciated beings wandered disconsolately about from town to town, seeking work and finding none, but spreading the disease wherever they went. The roadsides were lined with sick and dying, and not the poor and starving only — strong men and women in the full vigour of life fell before its ravages. Doctors, nurses, priests, engaged in the tender ministrations of their offices, caught the infection and died at their posts. The very air reeked contagion. Even the hand of agrarian outrage was paralysed. The visitation was too appalling, and men, women, and children perished in droves in pitiable, Oriental-like apathy and silence.

In England the state of Ireland awoke only a passing thrill of horror. England had her own troubles to bear. Since the conclusion of the great war she had passed through a period of intense economic distress. Neither agriculturists nor manufacturers

could find work for the extra hands that war prices had called into existence. Riots, incendiarism, bloodshed, and conspiracies, followed by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, were the consequence. How different! how much better than in Ireland, where men perished without a struggle, and almost without a moan! France, it was true, had been conquered; but French ideas—the ideas underlying the French Revolution—had taken root, and were germinating in England. Men studied Voltaire and Rousseau; they studied Adam Smith, and a strong reaction set in among the thinking class against arbitrary government. Nowhere was the feeling stronger than amongst the artisans of the north of England, with whom a radical reform of Parliament was the first and most essential article of their political creed.

The movement interested O'Connell. Granted a reform of Parliament, the abolition of rotten boroughs, and a redistribution of seats, there could hardly, he thought, be any question as to the success of Catholic emancipation. Already, in January, 1817, he had assisted at the formation in Dublin of a society of "Friends of Reform in Parliament." Though short-lived, the society had the effect of stimulating the expression of liberal opinion in favour of the Catholics, and on 3d May, 1819, Grattan had the satisfaction of presenting eight Roman Catholic and five Protestant petitions in favour of the Catholic claims. It was the last time he addressed the House in their behalf. It was an impressive speech, and his motion that the House should

resolve itself into committee was defeated by only two votes.

O'Connell was jubilant at the result. In December, 1818, he had protested that if he had to petition alone he would not let another session go by in ignominious silence, and now not only had the Catholics made themselves heard, but Protestant opinion had backed up their claims. Not one word had been said about the veto. The next session must surely, in his opinion, see them emancipated. "Whose fault," he wrote to O'Conor Don, on 21st November,

"will it be if we are not emancipated this session? I think our own. One grand effort now ought to emancipate us, confined, as it should be exclusively, to our own question. After *that* I would, I acknowledge, join the reformers, hand as well as heart, unless *they* do now emancipate. By they, of course I mean the Parliament. I intend instantly to set the cause in motion. . . . . I came to town only yesterday, and already I have many irons in the fire to raise the blaze which should lead us to victory."

His energy, indeed, was amazing. Next day he published a long address to the Catholics of Ireland. "The period," he wrote,

"is at length arrived when we may ascertain and place beyond any doubt whether it be determined that we are for ever to remain a degraded and inferior class in our native land. . . . . The session of Parliament commences in one short month. . . . . Let us then, my countrymen, meet; let us prepare our petitions; let those petitions be numerous; let them be unanimous and

confined to the single object of emancipation. . . . . You will be told you should despise emancipation as a minor and unworthy consideration and join the almost universal cry of reform. Do not be carried away by any such incitement. No man is more decidedly a friend to reform than I am. In theory, I admit the right to universal suffrage, and I admit that curtailing the duration of Parliament would be likely to add to its honesty. Nay, I am ready to go to the fullest practical length to obtain parliamentary reform. But we have a previous duty to perform: a favourable opportunity now presents itself to add to the general stock of liberty by obtaining our emancipation, and the man would, in my judgment, be a false patriot who, for the chance of an uncertain reform, would fling away the present most propitious moment to realize a most important and almost certain advantage."

The petitions were unanimously entrusted to the aged statesman, Henry Grattan. But the hand of death was upon him as he sailed for England amid the acclamations and tears of the large assembly that had congregated together on the quay to bid him "God-speed." It was a solemn journey, for the hopes of the Catholics beat high; and each one prayed that it might be granted to him, who through good and ill report had fought for their freedom, to achieve the long-wished-for victory. But it was otherwise ordained. On 4th June, 1820, a few days after reaching London, Grattan died.

"Oh!" exclaimed O'Connell, "I should exhaust the dictionary three times told ere I could enumerate the virtues of Grattan. . . . His life, to the very period

of his latest breath, has been spent in his country's service, and he died, I may even say, a martyr in her cause. Who shall now prate to me of religious animosity? To any such I will answer by pointing to his honoured tomb, and I will say, 'There sleeps a man, a member of the Protestant community, who died in the cause of his Catholic fellow-countrymen.'"

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CHAPTER VI.

THE KING'S VISIT.

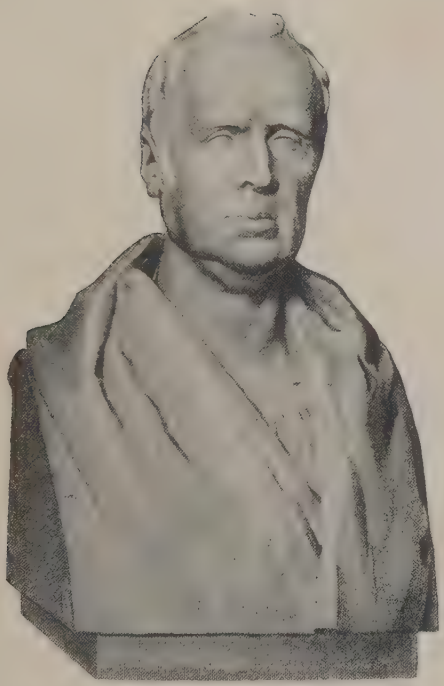
1821–1822.

GRATTAN'S death was a grievous disappointment to the Catholics, particularly to those who, with O'Connell, had sanguinely expected a favourable reception of their claims by Parliament. The difficulty was to find a substitute for him. Two names suggested themselves, that of Mr., afterwards Lord, Plunket and that of Maurice Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry. Plunket was undoubtedly by far the abler man; but his attitude in regard to the veto was even less satisfactory than Grattan's had been, and it was, in O'Connell's opinion, in the highest degree unwise to place themselves unreservedly in his hands. At his suggestion, it was therefore resolved to send a deputation to sound him on the point, and in the event of his reply proving unsatisfactory, to transfer their petition to the Knight of Kerry. Plunket met the deputation in a friendly manner, expressed his willingness to agitate their claims, but gave it as his opinion that some sort of conditions or securities were both just and necessary.

Under the circumstances, it was clearly the duty of the Committee to have reported in favour of entrusting the management of the Catholic claims to the Knight of Kerry. Instead of doing so, they resolved, by the casting vote of the chairman, to refer themselves unreservedly to Plunket's guidance. Their conduct irritated and alarmed O'Connell, who lost no time in denouncing their proceeding as wholly wrong and unjustifiable. As it was, he might, to use a popular phrase, have saved his breath to cool his porridge. For neither the House of Lords, that could listen for weeks to the nasty revelations connected with the divorce of George IV., nor the House of Commons, that was ready to adjourn from week to week at the convenience of the ministry, could find time to discuss the grievances of five millions of Irishmen. That session no Catholic petition was presented to Parliament, and thus, as O'Connell indignantly exclaimed, "has the best opportunity I have ever known of pressing emancipation on the ministry been thrown away and lost for ever."

Under the circumstances it only remained to fall back on the alternative he had previously suggested of joining the reformers, hand and heart. Accordingly, on 1st January, 1821, in a "Letter to the Catholics of Ireland," he urged that they should no longer petition for emancipation, but for reform of Parliament. It was time they should be weary of swelling the ranks of those

> "Who yearly kneel before their masters' doors,
> And hawk their wrongs, as beggars do their sores."



LORD PLUNKET.

FROM THE BUST BY CHRISTOPHER MOORE.

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It was useless — worse than useless — to petition a Parliament of *virtual* representatives for liberty — to be again rejected and mocked by the trickery of a debate, and insulted by an unreasoning majority. Let them cease their separate and exclusive labours. Let them endeavour to amalgamate the Catholic, the Protestant, the Presbyterian, the Dissenter, the Methodist, the Quaker, into the Irishman; and, forgetting their own individual wrongs, call upon Irishmen of every description to combine in a noble struggle for the natural and inherent rights of their wretched country. Let their future purpose be the abolition of that faction which had plunged England in war, in debt, in distress, and involved Ireland in all the miseries of the Union. Let them not enter into any quarrels as to the particular mode of reform; but let them be always governed by that principle of the constitution which justifies taxation upon the ground of consent; so that, without a solecism in constitutional law, no man should be taxed who is not represented.

It was, it must be confessed, a curiously weak and inconclusive argument, clearly showing that O'Connell was trying rather to convince himself than speaking his entire conviction of the wisdom of the step he was taking. Naturally his pronouncement attracted general attention, and was sharply commented upon, especially in vetoistic circles. Of this feeling Sheil made himself the spokesman. In his "Answer to Mr. O'Connell's Address," he had no difficulty in pointing out the weak points in his argument — indeed, they lay on the surface. But

O'Connell's suggestion had at least the merit of sincerity, which Sheil's counterblast did not possess. It was, however, an extremely clever production, and set forth the argument of the vetoists in its strongest aspect. O'Connell treated it with withering sarcasm.

"He was at a loss," he wrote, "to know how he had provoked the 'tragic wrath and noble ire of this iambic rhapsodist.' Nothing, it seemed to him, so unprovoked had ever appeared in the annals of causeless incivility. Mr. Sheil had set out in a passion, and preserved the consistency of his rage to the end. He reminded him of a gentleman who was so very angry an atheist that it was not safe for a believer to address him without prefacing his remark,—'Mr.——, I do not mean you any personal offence, but I really believe in the existence of a Deity.' So he had to say to Mr. Sheil, 'Sir, I do not mean you any insult,—indeed I do not,—but yet I am fervently, aye, and disinterestedly, attached to my religion, to my country, and to liberty.' Mr. Sheil was, no doubt, in his own opinion, a diamond of the first water. He was heartily welcome to sparkle at his expense; but he implored him, with all the earnestness of the plainest prose, to refrain from his sneering sarcasms against the long-suffering and very wretched people of Ireland."

To be treated as a meddlesome nobody hardly suited Sheil's notions of his own importance, and it was with some difficulty that he was dissuaded by his friend, the younger Curran, from demanding personal satisfaction from the man he had attacked. But it seemed as if he was going to reap a sweeter revenge than even a well directed bullet could have afforded him, in the fulfilment of his prophecy. The

retirement of Canning from the ministry, on which O'Connell had laid particular emphasis, had not, it appeared, weakened the Catholic cause, for on 28th February the House of Commons determined by a majority of six votes to resolve itself into committee for the consideration of the Catholic claims. But the appearance of Plunket's Bills confirmed O'Connell's worst suspicions. Not only were the Catholics specially excluded from the highest offices in the State, but securities and conditions were pronounced to be absolutely indispensable. O'Connell was at Limerick on circuit when the text of the Bills reached him. The situation, in his opinion, was critical in the extreme. The Bills appealed to the vetoists; they might pass both Houses, be sanctioned by the sovereign, and the last condition of the Catholics prove worse than their first. Without a moment's loss of time he sat down and penned another address to the Catholics, warning them against the insidious nature of the relief offered them. His intention was to pass a searching criticism on the two Bills. With the first he was soon ready. It was, he admitted, really an Emancipation Bill. Had it stood alone it would have given *unqualified* relief; and such unqualified relief, even without being half so extensive, would have been a source of lively and permanent gratitude. But it was otherwise when he came to examine its companion: "Beyond comparison more strictly, literally, and emphatically a penal and persecuting Bill than any or all the statutes passed in the darkest and most bigoted periods of the reigns of Queen Anne or of

the first two Georges." The letter, written in the intervals of professional duty, was published in portions, but it was never finished. Before it was completed help came to him from an unexpected quarter. After passing the House of Commons, on 16th April, the measure was rejected on its first reading in the House of Lords.

"What is to be done now?" wrote O'Connell to O'Conor Don, with a side-glance at Sheil and his friends. "Even the vetoists must admit that Securities do us no good, because we are kicked out as unceremoniously with them as without them." The announcement that George IV. would visit Ireland that summer came like a heaven-sent answer to his question. It was the first time for more than a century that their sovereign had thought it worth his while to visit Ireland: it was the first time since the Conquest that their sovereign had come to them as a messenger of peace. The announcement was received with infinite satisfaction, not merely by that class which always feels a delight in sunning itself in the rays of royalty, but by the nation at large. What benefits might not be expected to accrue from his visit to poor, distracted, down-trodden Ireland—the Cinderella of the family! Into the reasons of it they did not stop to inquire. It was sufficient that their sovereign was coming. The heart of the nation thrilled at the good news. A great wave of loyalty swept the land from one end to the other. For the nonce Orangeman and Catholic agreed to lay aside their feud and unite in giving their sovereign a unanimous welcome. The corporation of Dublin

GEORGE IV.

FROM A PAINTING BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A., IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

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set the way, and O'Connell on his side responded heartily, hoping that it might prove a step towards the realisation of his dream, when Catholic and Protestant, Orangeman and Ribbonman, should be merged in the Irishman.

Nevertheless the compromise, if such it may be called, was not accomplished without considerable friction. Neither the prospect of the King's visit, nor the promise given by the Lord Mayor in the name of the corporation, could restrain the Orangemen from celebrating the 12th of July in the time-honoured fashion of dressing the statue of King William in College Green. Their conduct exasperated the Catholics, and it required all O'Connell's tact to prevent them from retaliating with a hostile resolution. By venting their indignation they would, he declared, lose the vantage-ground on which they stood. Their enemies averred that they did nothing to conciliate. He might be called an "unhappy man," but he confessed he still hailed with joy the day on which the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the deputy grand-master of the Orangemen, made a peace-offering to the Catholics of Ireland. The admission might expose him to ridicule, but he was weak enough to wish to see those distinctions, which had been the curse of his country, sunk in the single name of Irishman, and he was credulous enough to think that a consummation so devoutly to be desired was by no means impossible. Mr. Sheil wanted to address the Castle. By all means let him do so. He would find ample redress! The statue would never be dressed again and the Catholics never again be

insulted! Perhaps they might also be told that the courts of law were open to them; perhaps, too, the Attorney-General might express his opinion on the illegality of Orange associations and extol the immense loyalty of the Catholics! In the end, it was unanimously resolved "That notwithstanding the unprovoked insult which has been offered to public feeling by the decoration of the statue in College Green, as a tribute of our homage to his Majesty, we shall avoid, by any remonstrance to Government, an interruption of that harmony to which we are anxious to contribute."

On 12th August George IV. landed at Howth amid the booming of cannons and the clashing of bells. That night Dublin was illuminated; fires blazed in the streets, and lights shone from every window, not the least brilliantly lighted being O'Connell's own residence. The news of Queen Caroline's death interrupted the festivities for several days; but on 17th August the King entered Dublin in state. As the royal cortége, slowly winding its way from the viceregal lodge past Phibsborough, through Eccles Street and Cavendish Row, passed under the triumphal arch, at the top of Sackville Street, that marked the bounds of the city proper, a stupendous spectacle broke upon the monarch's gaze. The whole of that magnificent thoroughfare, from the ground to the roofs of the houses, seemed alive with human beings. Not a window was empty, not a single coign of vantage, not the architrave itself of the post-office, nor the very capstan on which rested the statue of Nelson, was vacant. And if the

street, as a wit remarked, was badly paved, at any rate it was well flagged. Shout upon shout rent the air as the King, standing in his carriage, and evidently profoundly moved at the unexpected warmth of his reception, bowed to right and left, pointing now to his heart, now to the large bunch of shamrock he wore in his hat. Crossing Carlisle Bridge a similar ovation awaited him in Dame Street, and long after he had disappeared from sight behind the walls of the Castle the applause of the populace testified to the joy with which they welcomed their sovereign. It was an unique experience in his worthless, wasted life; it was a new experience in the dreary annals of Ireland. It seemed as if the millennium had come; as if, after centuries of oppression, the Irish people, united in the bond of loyalty, all their party feuds and hatreds forgotten, had entered on a new and happy period in their history. O'Connell could have wept for joy. "One bright day had realised all his fond expectations. It was said of St. Patrick that he had power to banish venomous reptiles from the isle; but his Majesty had performed a greater moral miracle. The sound of his approach had allayed the dissensions of centuries."

Carried away by the general enthusiasm, he not only accepted an invitation to dine with the Lord Mayor, but presented himself at Court, put his name down as a subscriber—and, what few did, actually paid his money—for the erection of a royal palace to commemorate the King's visit, which was to cost a million of money, but which, in default of the necessary funds, eventually took the form of a

bridge; and if he did not, as the English newspapers asserted, accompany the King at his departure and, literally kneeling in the water, present him with a laurel crown, he at least showed by every act in his power that he, for one, was willing to let bygones be bygones, and to prove that his Majesty had no more loyal subject than he was. The comedy did not come to an end with the King's departure. A letter signed by the Prime Minister, thanking the nation, in the King's name, for the friendly reception accorded him, and recommending peace and unity, mutual forbearance and good will, was construed as a hopeful token of a more liberal policy in the future; and that it might not remain a dead letter O'Connell founded a "Loyal Union, or Royal Georgian Club" in Dublin, for the express purpose of encouraging mutual forbearance and good will and perpetuating that "affectionate gratitude towards his Majesty, King George the Fourth (whom God preserve), which now animates every Irish bosom." The society pledged itself to meet and dine together at least six times a year, each member dressed in cloth of Irish manufacture and in the colours worn by the citizens of Dublin on the auspicious day of his Majesty's public entry into the city.

Meanwhile a scornful world looked on and laughed at the sad spectacle, and Byron, in the name of common sense and decency, lashed both O'Connell and the nation for their servility in scathing verse.

"Ere the daughter of Brunswick is cold in her grave,
And her ashes still float to their home o'er the tide,

KING'S BRIDGE, DUBLIN.

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Lo ! George the Triumphant speeds over the wave
To the long-cherished isle, which he loved like his
—bride.

. . . . . .

" But he comes ! the Messiah of royalty comes !
Like a goodly Leviathan rolled from the waves ;
Then receive him as best such an advent becomes,
With a legion of cooks and an army of slaves.

" He comes in the promise and bloom of three-score,
To perform in the pageant the sovereign's part—
But long live the shamrock which shadows him o'er,
Could the green in his *hat* be transferred to his *heart !*

" Could that long-withered spot but be verdant again,
And a new spring of noble affections arise—
Then might freedom forgive thee this dance in thy
chain,
And this shout of thy slavery which saddens the skies.

" Is it madness, or meanness which clings to thee now ?
Were he God—as he is but the commonest clay,
With scarce fewer wrinkles than sins on his brow—
Such servile devotion might shame him away.

. . . . . .

" Wear, Fingal, thy trapping ! O'Connell, proclaim
His accomplishments ! *His ! ! !* and thy country
convince
Half an age's contempt was an error of fame,
And that Hal is the rascaliest, sweetest *young* prince !

. . . . . .

" Ah ! build him a dwelling ! Let each give his mite !
Till, like Babel, the new royal dome hath arisen !

Let thy beggars and helots their pittance unite—
And a palace bestow for a poorhouse and prison!

"Spread,—spread for Vitellius the royal repast,
Till the gluttonous despot be stuffed to the gorge!
And the roar of his drunkards proclaim him at last
The Fourth of the fools and oppressors called 'George'!

. . . . . .

"Shout, drink, feast, and flatter! Oh! Erin, how low
Wert thou sunk by misfortune and tyranny, till
Thy welcome of tyrants hath plunged thee below
The depth of thy deep in a deeper gulf still."

The awakening came in the end, and no one felt the disappointment more keenly than did O'Connell. A few weeks after the King's departure Sheil neatly summed up the situation—"Love one another, said the King: Hate one another, said the law, and the law was speedily obeyed." Still nothing would convince O'Connell that he had not acted for the best, and the more his conduct was impugned the more obstinately did he defend it. Years afterwards, reverting to the subject, he said:

"This was the most critical period of my political life, and that in which I had the good fortune to be most successful. If I have any merit for the success of the Catholic cause, it is principally to be found in the mode in which I neutralised the most untoward events and converted the most sinister appearances and circumstances into the utmost extent of practical usefulness to the cause of which I was the manager. . . . I am entitled to this fact, that no part of my political life

obtained, I will say deservedly, so much of the gratitude and confidence of my countrymen as the mode in which I was able to convert the King's visit to Ireland from being a source of weakness and discomfiture to the Catholics into a future claim for practical relief and political equalisation."

But, if it is impossible to concede O'Connell's claim to have acted either wisely or with dignity, it must be allowed that personal considerations had little to do with his conduct, for between him and George IV. there was little love lost. Moreover, it must be granted that the Catholics, under his guidance, acted with admirable self-restraint, and if their demand for emancipation was disregarded, their attitude strengthened the hands of their friends in Parliament and in the ministry itself. Emancipation, indeed, had now become an open question, and the division in the Cabinet reflected itself in Ireland in the inauguration of what was not inaptly called a "sandwich system," having for its object the conciliation of both Catholics and Protestants.

In December Lord Talbot was recalled, and the Marquis of Wellesley appointed Viceroy in his place. As a friend of the Catholics his appointment, it was hoped, would conciliate them; but that it might not alarm the Protestants, or give rise to the idea that any change of system was intended, Henry Goulburn, who was generally believed to be a member of the Orange Society, was joined with him as Chief Secretary. So far neither side had reason to be offended. But Wellesley in taking office had stipulated for the removal of Saurin and the appointment

of Plunket as Attorney-General. This for two reasons: First, because he felt it desirable to have someone sharing his opinions to represent him in the House of Commons, and secondly, because he recognised that the retention of Saurin, who represented implacable resistance to the Catholic claims, was impossible if conciliation and not coercion was to be the order of the day. It had been intended to soften his removal by appointing him Chief-Justice of the King's Bench, with an Irish or even an English peerage; but Saurin indignantly declined any compensation, whereupon Wellesley seized the opportunity to make Bushe, to whose eloquence and impartiality O'Connell had testified on the occasion of Magee's trial, Chief-Justice. His action exposed him to the fierce attacks of the Orangemen. In explaining his conduct Wellesley is reported to have said:

"I have been told that I have ill-treated Mr. Saurin. I offered him the Chief-Justiceship of the King's Bench; *that* was not ill-treating him. I offered him an English peerage; *that* was not ill-treating him. I did *not*, it is true, continue him in the viceroyalty of Ireland, for *I* am the Viceroy of Ireland."

The Catholics were jubilant at the courage of the new Viceroy, and O'Connell, with his usual impulsiveness to see good in the most trivial actions, was loud in his praise. On 7th January, 1822, the Catholics met to vote an address of welcome to the Lord Lieutenant, and in moving it O'Connell gave expression to the general satisfaction which his first

measures had created. "He could not," he said, "regard him otherwise than as a representative, not only of power, but also of the kindly disposition of our beloved sovereign; and therefore it was their duty, as well as their pleasure, to testify their respect towards him in the most emphatic manner." The address, seconded by Sheil, whose production it was, was graciously received by his Excellency. But O'Connell was not content to rest on his oars. Something had, it was true, been achieved; but not as yet emancipation, and he well knew what construction would be placed on their inaction. Accordingly, without any loss of time, he issued another stirring address to the Catholics. Their liberty, he reminded them, could not be obtained without an effort on their own part. The appointment of the Marquis of Wellesley and the substitution of Plunket for Saurin were circumstances that cheered them amidst that sickness of heart which arose from hope deferred. Last year they had not petitioned Parliament, but events had since occurred to induce them to make one exertion more to obtain from the British Parliament that liberty which they knew to be their right, but which they were ready to receive with all the affectionate gratitude due to the most gratuitous boon. If they were again defeated, they must patiently abide the great march of events, and hope for that tide of national reform which, though repulsed for the moment, was gaining ground with every breaker. The question arose as to what form their petition should take. It was clear that men's minds were divided on the subject of the veto. It

was evident that it had become a fixed principle with some of their advocates that emancipation must be accompanied with some Securities against foreign influence in the appointment of their bishops. It therefore behoved them to consider what conditions they could consent to without infringing the integrity of their religion. With this object in view he had himself drawn up a scheme for the domestic nomination of their prelates, which did not, in his opinion, infringe the liberties of the Church, and at the same time offered all reasonable security to the State. In the framing of it he had Plunket's advice, but if, on consideration of it, it was felt that no fragment of that sacred edifice, which their ancestors had left them as a most precious inheritance, could be touched with safety, why, then, let them one and all resolve, in the name of God, not to accept any civil rights at the expense of any danger whatsoever to their religion.

An aggregate meeting on 13th February voted in favour of petitioning, but it again happened that no petition was presented to Parliament. The state of the country at large and the recrudescence of agrarian crime rendered it, in Plunket's opinion, inadvisable and, indeed, hopeless to broach the question. Instead of emancipation came an Insurrection Act. The brutal callousness of the remedy exasperated O'Connell. That disturbances existed, especially in the counties of Cork, Limerick, and Kerry, where the orders of "Captain Rock" found too ready obedience, he admitted; but no one, he insisted, dreamed of connecting the Roman Catholics as a

body with them, and it was as unjust as it was impossible to punish the whole country in order to suppress some isolated cases of outrage. Still it was, he felt, no time to start a constitutional agitation, which might be construed by their enemies as complicity in the agrarian movement, and it was with a heavy heart that he recognised the necessity of letting the subject rest. The fact was, that in his attempt to administer the law impartially Lord Wellesley had managed to alienate the sympathies of both parties in the State. Anxious above all to steer a neutral course, he had, instead of conciliating, only succeeded in offending the Orangemen and Catholics by turns. To the former the removal of Saurin, to the latter the Insurrection Act, was an inexpiable crime.

The 12th July approached, and the Orangemen gave signs of their intention to celebrate the time-honoured custom of dressing the statue of King William. The day before the anniversary, O'Connell addressed a public letter to the Marquis of Wellesley.

"To-morrow," he wrote, "will finally decide the character of your administration. The oppressed and neglected Catholics of Ireland had fondly hoped that they might have obtained from a *friend*, placed in the exalted situation which your Excellency occupies, a recommendation in favour of their claims. You *took* an early opportunity to crush that hope for ever. In your reply to the Address of the Catholics of the county of Clare, you told the Irish people that you came here to 'administer the laws, not to alter them.' My lord, but a few weeks elapsed when you deemed it expedient to recommend the Insurrection Act, and the Act to suspend the Habeas Corpus.

That the latter was not needed is now admitted by everybody; and that any necessity is a justification of the former remains, in my humble judgment, to be proved. But let these pass. It still remains for your Excellency to *administer the laws*. . . . My Lord, I most respectfully, but at the same time most firmly, call upon you to *administer them*. The exhibition intended (it is said) for to-morrow is plainly a violation of the law. It is an open and public excitement to a breach of the peace—it is a direct provocation to tumult—it obstructs the public streets, by collecting on the one side an insulting, and on the other an irritated, concourse of persons. . . . . As you cannot *alter*, I again respectfully, dutifully, but firmly call upon you to *administer the law* and to suppress an illegal and insulting nuisance."

This strong remonstrance was not without its effect on the Viceroy, and he made a feeble attempt to persuade the Orange leaders to desist from the irritating custom. But his entreaties were disregarded, and next day the statue was dressed as usual. The event, so far as O'Connell was concerned, had decided the character of the administration.

It was, therefore, with a feeling of intense relief at escaping from an intolerable situation that, when the vacation came round, he set out to join his wife at Pau, in the south of France, whither he had sent her early in the year for the benefit of her health. After spending several delicious weeks there in the bosom of his family, and escorting them as far as Tours, where they were to pass the winter, he returned to Ireland. The situation had hardly altered during his absence. The Orangemen were busy, when he

reached Dublin, with their preparations for celebrating the birthday of their patron King, whose character they ignorantly maligned, with greater splendour than usual. But the failure to prevent by entreaty the outrage that had occurred on 12th July had constrained the Viceroy to take stronger measures. The ceremony of dressing William's statue was prohibited, and on the morning of 4th November a body of soldiers was posted in College Green to see that his orders were executed. It is said that an adventurous Orangeman did actually, before the dawn broke, manage to throw a few trappings over it; but the celebration was prevented. The Orangemen were wild with indignation, and it was even said that Saurin had pronounced the Viceroy's conduct to be illegal. They had long been angry with him, and even his presence at their banquets had failed to suppress the fashionable toast "to the exports of Ireland,"—an equivocal rendering of the old saying, "A good riddance to bad rubbish,"—with which his departure from the room was hailed.

On 14th December these outrages on decency reached their climax. That evening the Viceroy visited the Theatre Royal in state. On entering the viceregal box he was hailed with cheers mingled with groans and hisses. As the play, *She Stoops to Conquer*, proceeded the hisses and groans became more distinct, and shouts were heard from the gallery of "A groan for Wellesley!" "No Popish governors!" When the curtain fell the band played "God save the King" and "St. Patrick's Day." During the music, first an apple hit the viceregal box, then came

an empty quart bottle, which, striking the box just above the Viceroy's head, rebounded into the orchestra. The theatre presented a scene of wild excitement; ladies fainted; shouts of "Seize the miscreant!" mingled with groans and hisses resounded from all sides, when suddenly a large piece of wood, part of a watchman's rattle, hit the cushion in front of the box and fell on to the stage. The confusion that followed was indescribable. In the midst of the tumult the Marquis was seen to rise from his seat and, pointing to a corner in the gallery, to address a few words to an aide-de-camp. In consequence of the riot several persons were arrested; but neither in Dublin nor in London was the Government able to obtain a conviction. A subsequent inquiry in the House of Commons revealed the strength and solidarity of the Orange Society, and showed how the institution of the jury was but as clay in the hands of the potter to those who were allowed to form the panel.

Public sympathy was, however, unmistakably on the side of the Viceroy. Men of different political and religious creeds met together and passed resolutions condoling with him on the insult offered to him. At one of these meetings, in the Royal Exchange on 20th December, with Lord Mayor Fleming in the chair, O'Connell, after alluding to the incident which had aroused the indignation, sorrow, and shame of the country, touched lightly on the events which had preceded this last unparallelled atrocity. These events, he said, it would, perhaps, be better to forget; and taking this atrocity for an example of the

baneful and dangerous excesses of illegal associations of every description, they should all unite and join in the universal inculcation of the salutary lesson, that loyalty, to be genuine, should be rational; and that loyalty was not the peculiar prerogative of one sect or another, but was the legitimate and appropriate characteristic of all his Majesty's subjects, of every class, every rank, and every denomination. The sermon was in fact intended quite as much for his own followers, the Catholics, as for their enemies, the Orangemen. How deeply he had been impressed by the revival of agrarian outrage in the south of Ireland, followed as it had been by the Insurrection Act, every speech delivered by him at this time testifies. How often had he implored his countrymen to refrain from deeds of lawlessness lest a worse evil should befall them! And now the evil had happened. What a handle had they given to their enemies! What a pretext not only to refuse to emancipate them, but to load their slavery with more grievous shackles! It was true, he admitted, that crime had abounded in the south. The Irish peasantry, in the insanity of their poverty and wretchedness, had taken up arms. In the dark hour of midnight, they prowled to the perpetration of horrible excesses. Of these he was not, God forbid he should be, in the most distant degree, the apologist; but it should be remembered that their wants and their wretchedness were extreme: it should not be forgotten that the weight of their misery pressed upon them so heavily as to provoke them in some degree to burst those bonds of order,

which, under any circumstances, it was their bounden duty to observe and revere.

But something more than sympathy, he felt, was needed if the Irish peasantry were to be saved from the consequences of their poverty and their crime. To weep with those who wept was doubtless very beautiful, but it was also very useless. And it was eminently characteristic of O'Connell that he no sooner recognised a grievance than he tried to find a practical remedy for it. Emancipation and the admission of the Catholics to the full enjoyment of civil rights was the object at which he aimed—not, indeed, the great object of his life, which was the restoration to Ireland of her rights as a nation. But practical good government, the impartial administration of the laws, the removal of crying grievances—these were much more to him than any ideal. And it was only because he saw in emancipation and the restoration of national rights the realisation of these objects that he struggled to obtain them. Emancipation was a step to Repeal: both merely a means to good government. Meanwhile the question that he had to face was how to get at these famine-, pestilence-, outrage-stricken peasants? How make them listen to the voice of wisdom and refrain from playing into the hands of their enemies? In England, men had no time to think of Ireland. They were ignorant and indifferent as to the causes of her distress. Parliament was too far off, and acts of coercion were easier of manipulation than acts to redress grievances. In Ireland itself, since the collapse of the feeble successor of the Catholic Board, there was no body

of public opinion to which the peasants could refer themselves for advice; no one to stand between them and their enemies. Ever that horrible Convention Act blocked the way. To get rid of it was impossible. How to evade it? Long and deeply, all through the winter of that terrible year, 1822, did O'Connell ponder over the problem. The solution came in the end, and unexpectedly brought with it the solution of the greater problem of emancipation.

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CHAPTER VII.

FOUNDATION OF THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION.

1823–1824.

ONE day towards the latter end of April, 1823, O'Connell and a number of Catholic gentlemen met together in Dempsey's tavern, in Sackville Street. It was a place well known to Dublin citizens who loved a good glass of wine and a well-cooked chop or steak. Added to these attractions, it possessed a large, lofty room, which, when the tavern was succeeded by Tyrrel's Library, formed the reading-room of that institution. It was this latter fact that had drawn O'Connell and his friends thither, and the fame of tavern and library has yielded to that of the little meeting. For it was here that the mighty Catholic Association, that shook the whole social fabric of Ireland to its basis, that wrested emancipation from a hostile administration and made its influence felt on the bourses of Europe, had its birth. The meeting had been convened at the requisition of O'Connell and Sheil in order to consider the state of the Catholic question. Of late years there had been a practical suspension

SACKVILLE STREET, DUBLIN.

FROM BARTLETT'S "IRELAND."

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of agitation, and things had gone backward rather than forward with them. At the same time, however, the old quarrel over the veto had lost much of its asperity, and no longer formed an insuperable obstacle to a reunion of all parties. A new generation, too, had been springing up, and was beginning to take an active part in public affairs. Suffering had softened men's feelings toward each other, and there was no longer that antagonism between class and class that had worked havoc in their councils of the past.

Moving Lord Killeen, the Earl of Fingal's son, who to high rank added sound views and a lofty spirit of independence unusual in a Catholic peer, into the chair, O'Connell rose to explain the object of the meeting. It was, he said, clear to everybody that the state of the Catholics of Ireland was at the moment more degrading, if not more hopeless, than it had ever been. No one, on the contrary, could accuse their enemies, the Orangemen, of supineness. They were not only ready to use their opportunities, but to abuse them to the uttermost, whenever it was in their power, and it was useless to conceal that, if things went on as they had recently done, Catholic life and property would not in a little time be commonly safe, even in the capital itself. Under the circumstances, it was dangerous to leave the people without some body of recognised friends to whom they could turn in their distresses and maddening sufferings for counsel, sympathy, and what aid there might be the means of giving. The meeting had been called to consider the possibility of forming

some such public body. The recommendation was approved, and at a subsequent meeting it was resolved to submit the suggestion to an aggregate assembly to be held on 10th May.

On that day Townshend Street chapel was filled with a concourse of Catholics anxious to listen to O'Connell's exposition of his scheme for the establishment of a Catholic Association. What, he asked them, after briefly reviewing the course of events since the King's visit, what had been the result of their having so meritoriously conducted themselves? Had it not been that their cause was abandoned; that they had neglected their duty to themselves? They had lain quiescent, and permitted the daily promulgation of Orange calumny, fearful of infringing the commands of their sovereign. But there was a point beyond which experiment became dangerous. The Catholics were men—they were Irishmen, and felt within their burning breasts the force of natural rights and the injustice of unnatural oppression. It was impossible that they should ever lie like torpid slaves under the lash of their oppressors. It was useless any longer to leave the interests of five millions of men, excluded from the benefits of the constitution, to the mere eleemosynary protection of their advocates in Parliament, who, however well disposed to shield them from the persecution, insult, and injustice of their oppressors, had neither the opportunities of becoming acquainted with their daily grievances, nor the time to devote to the study of the particular and peculiar circumstances of their situation. Rather should it be their

care to attend to their own local affairs and, by the information they thereby obtained, to assist their parliamentary advocates in bringing to the contest useful and important knowledge as to the effects of the disabilities under which they groaned. When a Catholic Association existed, had they not succeeded, by addressing the suffering peasantry, in quelling three different attempts at insurrection? Had a Catholic Association at the time existed, would they not have been able to warn the unsuspecting peasantry against the villainy of persons who had an actual interest in promoting disaffection? Had the Association existed, how many of their peasantry would have been saved to their families and homes? Their advice would have been listened to, because it would have been known to be honest, and the country would have been spared the infringement of the constitution and the enormous expense of an additional police, with the irritation occasioned by sectarian yeomanry corps, which served no other purpose than to perpetuate strife and create a natural desire of revenge in the opposite parties. He begged to move the establishment of a Catholic Association, and the loud and prolonged cheers with which his proposal was greeted testified to the approval of his audience.

The first step had been taken. A Catholic Association was to be founded; but the machinery that was to work it still remained to be invented. A day or two afterwards an informal meeting was held in Dempsey's tavern. At O'Connell's suggestion, such gentlemen as found themselves present at it resolved

themselves into a Catholic Association. The annual subscription entitling to membership was fixed at one guinea, and the place of meeting Coyne's book-shop, No. 4 Capel Street. About fifty gentlemen at once subscribed their guineas, and with the ardour proper to new societies the Association met next day at Coyne's; but the first regular meeting was post-poned till 20th May. It was called to consider the question of the appointment of a Catholic chaplain to Newgate gaol. The Association at once took fright. The terrors of the Convention Act loomed horridly before them, and an attempt was made to get rid of the dangerous topic by moving an adjourn-ment on the ground that the society was not sufficiently organised to occupy itself with matters of such deep importance! O'Connell had to remind them that the object of the Association was not to force on Parliament the annual farce, or, more properly, a triennial interlude of a debate on the Catholic claims. Their purpose was with practical and not abstract questions—to shame the advocates of an unwise system, and, by exposing its corruption in all its branches, to show that it worked badly and impracticably for the country. He trusted they should have the assistance of men of every religious creed in melting down sectarian acrimony into a community of Irish feeling. There were many grievances under which the poor and unprotected Catholic peasant smarted that would not admit of waiting for redress until the day of emancipation arrived, and that might well be made the subjects of separate application to Parliament and the laws.

But all his eloquence was insufficient to inspire them with the necessary ardour to face the danger and drudgery of the work. A week after its first meeting, the Association was adjourned for lack of ten members to form the necessary quorum. It was dispiriting to O'Connell, after a hard day's work in the Four Courts, to hurry up to Coyne's, time after time, to find himself and O'Gorman the sole occupants of the room. Still he refused to be discouraged, and on 14th June he had the hardihood to congratulate the few loiterers whom idleness or curiosity had attracted into the room on the diminution of crime that had occurred during the few weeks the Association had existed.

The vacation he again spent abroad with his wife in France, returning to Ireland towards the latter end of October. All the while he had been pondering how to make the Association more popular, and to awaken a wider interest in its aims and objects. And it hardly needed the first few weeks that followed his return to show him that, unless something was done, and that speedily, there was a danger of the whole movement collapsing. The narrow two-roomed floor above Coyne's book-shop barely at best half-filled; the intermittent attendance of members, some of whom had not even paid their subscriptions; the bored air with which they listened to his speeches on the rights of Catholic sepulture, tithes, etc.; the irregularity and indecent haste of their proceedings; the impatience with which they awaited the conclusion of the business that should allow them to return to their homes; the frequent

adjournments that occurred owing to the impossibility of getting a quorum of ten together; above all, the scanty driblets of money that found their way by circuitous routes into the treasury of the society—were signs, the meaning of which could not be mistaken. Money, indeed, was the chief difficulty. The moment sufficient money was forthcoming, the other difficulties, O'Connell felt, would speedily solve themselves. The question was how to raise it.

At a meeting on 24th January, 1824, one of the members, after pathetically alluding to the scanty attendance at their meetings, proposed that letters should be written to all the Roman Catholic peers, sons of peers, baronets, etc., etc., inviting them to become members of the Association. O'Connell opposed the proposal for two reasons. First, because it would furnish an incentive to anonymous abuse at a time when the Catholics were so pitilessly assailed by Tory and Orange malignity, both in England and Ireland, that it behooved them in the defence of their own interests to be watchful and not intentionally to supply their enemies with weapons of offence. Secondly, because he had a scheme of his own for extending the influence of the society, by calling upon every Catholic in Ireland to contribute a monthly sum from one penny up to two shillings to the general fund. So that by a general effort of that kind the people of England should see that Catholic millions felt a deep interest in the cause, and that it was not, as was supposed, confined to those styled "agitators."

It was some time before he could find an opportunity to expound his plan, owing to the rule of the Association, whereby, if after the lapse of half an hour from the time of meeting less than ten members were present, the meeting stood adjourned. So often did this happen that it became quite amusing to watch the cynicism with which the secretary, Purcell O'Gorman, regularly ten minutes before the half hour had elapsed placed his watch on the table, and, as it marked half-past three, returned it to his pocket, saying, "It 's half-past three, gentlemen, and ten members are not present : we must adjourn." The action grated on O'Connell's nerves. At last, on 4th February, the spell was broken. Punctually to the minute O'Gorman placed his watch on the table ; there were only, as usual, seven members present ; in ten minutes, unless fresh members arrived, the meeting would be adjourned. One minute more elapsed ; O'Connell could stand it no longer and, flinging away the newspaper he had been reading, hastily quitted the room. The six remaining members looked at each other aghast. Had it come to this at last? Had the apathy of the Catholics at last succeeded in disgusting him into throwing up their cause? The answer came directly. Rushing down-stairs, O'Connell passed an eighth member on his way up. In Coyne's shop he found two young priests purchasing books. It was the work of a moment to overcome their scruples, and returning with them to the room, just as O'Gorman was about to replace his watch in his pocket, he moved a Mr. Coppinger into the chair, and without further

preliminary plunged *in medias res.* It was the last time in the history of the Association that a meeting was adjourned from insufficient attendance. There was no rule allowing a count-out, and the two young priests, terrified at the position in which they found themselves, speedily retired; but other members arrived, and there was a fairly good attendance before the business of the meeting was concluded.

To a meeting, one of the most important ever held in Ireland, got together in such fashion, O'Connell, after referring to the legal position in which they found themselves owing to the interpretation placed by Justice Downes on the Convention Act, proceeded to unfold his scheme for the establishment of a Catholic Rent. The project he knew would be well abused and perhaps laughed at; but in truth he was not the author of it. The idea had, in fact, originated with Lord Kenmare in 1785. "There are," wrote his lordship to Dr. Moylan, "two thousand five hundred Catholic parishes in the kingdom. Let us make a rent of one pound sterling a year upon each parish, and that, accumulating and forming a permanent fund, will be a powerful ally in the contest for emancipation." His own plan was somewhat more comprehensive. There were seven millions of Catholics in Ireland. Supposing that less than a quarter of them were to contribute one penny each individual in the month, there would be no difficulty in raising at least £50,000 a year. The feasibility of the plan was obvious. He remembered that in 1812 he himself had proposed and set on foot a temporary subscription, and in three parishes alone he had

collected £79, which had gone into the funds of the Catholic Board. The collection would then have been continued under a regular organisation, had not miserable disputes arisen between what was called the Catholic aristocracy and the Catholic democracy and upset everything. He promised that no such result should follow the present experiment. He himself would carefully superintend and work out most perseveringly every detail of his plan, and would not abandon it but with life. He was thoroughly and entirely convinced, not only of its practicability, but of its certain efficaciousness for its purposes. At the same time it was only natural that people who were called upon to subscribe their money should desire to have some idea how that money was to be spent. Granted then that £50,000 were annually forthcoming, he had five distinct and decided objects in view. His first object was the collection and conveying of petitions to Parliament, not only on the subject of Catholic emancipation but upon that of every other grievance of whatever kind that pressed upon the country, together with the appointment of a parliamentary agent in London. To this end he would set aside £5000. His second object was the promotion of a more friendly feeling on the part of the public towards the Catholics, by supporting the liberal press both in London and Dublin. Less than £15,000 for this purpose he thought would be insufficient. His third object was to provide legal protection for the Catholics against Orange oppression. This suggestion, coming from the quarter it did, might cause him to be sneered at;

but it was really frightful to think of the oppressions which it was in the power of a magistrate, tinged with Orange principles, to inflict upon the people. Allocating £15,000 for this purpose, there would still remain £15,000. Of this he proposed to set aside £5000 for the education of the Catholic poor; £5000 for the education of Catholic priests for the service of America; the remaining £5000 to be held over to accumulate and be applied to the building of chapels, taking farms in the several parishes and erecting a house upon each for the Catholic clergyman.

The meeting listened, half credulously, half amusedly, to the exposition of his penny-a-month plan for liberating Ireland; but it agreed by a majority of twenty-one to four to print the report. The public, as he had predicted, laughed heartily at his new project; but it was clear, when he arose to address an aggregate meeting a fortnight later in Townshend Street chapel on the desirability of petitioning Parliament, that he had at last, after long years of unappreciated labour, succeeded in touching the heart of the nation. The rapturous cheers with which he was greeted approved his declaration that the scheme was a feasible one, and were tokens that in its adoption a new day had dawned for him and for Ireland. The long night of apathy and despair had passed away, the dawn was breaking, the hour of the nation's awakening had sounded. Hitherto, as he told his audience, the best exertions of the Catholics had been frustrated owing to the want of pecuniary means. A general subscription would overcome that difficulty. He only asked for a penny a month,—

a farthing a week,—and the response of his listeners, as with one voice they shouted, "You shall have it," was in this instance no mere evanescent explosion of popular enthusiasm. The harvest indeed was there, ripe unto reaping; but the labourers at first were few, and the task of organising the Rent taxed O'Connell's powers to the utmost.

Beginning in the towns, the collection of the Rent was at first undertaken by volunteers, who formed themselves into committees, divided the towns into "walks," and remitted their funds through their secretaries to the central association in Dublin. Little by little the organisation spread to the neighbouring parishes, and thence into the remotest parts of the country. As it grew, its objects developed. Committee rooms were hired, weekly meetings established, and matters of public importance discussed at them. The result was magical. Instead of one Association, exercising a limited influence, a hundred sprang into existence, following more or less closely on the lines of the parent institution, each forming and leading public opinion in the district in which it was located, and spreading a knowledge of the aims and objects of the Association into every quarter of the island. Not only was the collection of the Rent thereby facilitated and the funds of the society increased, but a means of communication was established between the leaders of the movement in Dublin and the peasantry scattered over the country, which enabled the former to control it and to secure instant obedience for their commands. A spirit of inquiry was awakened in the masses of the

people, and a passion created in them for political discussion. They began to read the papers in which their proceedings were recorded and their contributions acknowledged, and finding themselves not so insignificant as they had hitherto imagined, assumed a bolder and more independent deportment. Nor was this all: each committee formed a sort of tribunal for the adjustment of local disputes, for redressing grievances and the protection of the oppressed. Intolerance and injustice trembled before it; the village tyrant hated and feared it; the peasant appealed to it and obeyed it. The clergy, too, animated by a few of their dignitaries, and above all by the example of the pious and learned Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Dr. Doyle, threw themselves, after a little hesitation, into the movement, thereby giving to it a moral sanction of infinite value, and acquiring for themselves a firm hold on the affection and obedience of their flocks.

As the effects of the Association became apparent hope was rekindled in the breasts of the peasantry. They felt that something, to use their own words, was being done for them also. It awoke a new life in them. It was their first step out of servitude into nationality. Their gratitude to the author of it was unbounded. To O'Connell, notwithstanding his modest disclaimer to be the originator of the scheme, they ascribed, and rightly ascribed, their regeneration. O'Connell indeed was the life and soul, the creator and sustainer of the whole movement. Without him — without his enthusiasm, it would never have existed: without him — without his

BISHOP DOYLE.

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guiding hand, it would have run into illegal courses, and have lost its influence. But even O'Connell did not at first perceive the full consequence of his plan. So far as annual revenue went, he was doomed to disappointment; but the establishment of the Rent did more than he had ever dreamt of. It called a nation into existence. For himself, it was the beginning of that extraordinary popularity which was the wonder and envy of mankind. Hitherto he had been only one of their leaders; but the establishment of the Rent lifted him in the imagination of his countrymen into a unique position. Everywhere he went, on circuit, he met with an ovation; willing hands dragged his carriage and banquets met him at every turn. His popularity gratified him. He felt his power, and did all that he could to promote it. But his ambition was for his country, not for himself; and herein lay the secret of his popularity and influence.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE ATTACK ON THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION.

1824–1825.

THE progress of the Association was rapid. Very soon the narrow two-roomed floor in Capel Street became inconveniently small for the transaction of the business devolving upon it, and in October it moved into more spacious premises in the Corn Exchange, on Ussher's quay.

Meanwhile Government, which had regarded the establishment of the Association with languid interest, began to feel alarmed as it realised how formidable the movement was becoming. It was impossible to watch the growth of this *imperium in imperio* with complacency; but the difficulty was, how to meet it, seeing that it violated no existing law. There were, Peel wrote to Goulburn, on 6th November, several alternatives before them. They might do nothing, and let the Association take its course, trusting to the chance of disunion among its members, or of their bringing discredit upon themselves by the folly of their proceedings. Still it was impossible to deny that the evils of forbearance and delay were

very great; the friends of Government would be dismayed and disheartened, while the Association gained in firmness and consistency. On the other hand, they might take advantage of any violation of the law to strike a blow at the Association, or go to Parliament and ask for a new law to suppress it entirely. Such a special law would of course cause a great outcry, but the appeal to the legislature would at least have the advantage of affording a full exposition of the danger that confronted them. The Duke of Wellington took an even more serious view of the situation, and thought that everything portended a civil war sooner or later. Curiously enough, Goulburn, who as being on the spot might have been expected to be more seriously alarmed, quietly ridiculed Wellington's idea of an insurrection. "Those," he wrote on 14th December,

"who look to immediate and combined insurrection appear to me to mistake the nature of the danger. I cannot, as yet, trace the existence of any such project. I do not believe that it exists. The people have no military organisation, no adequate supply of arms, no pecuniary resources, no regular leaders. The immediate danger that I contemplate is a sudden ebullition of fanatical fury in particular places, originating not in any settled or premeditated plan, but in some casual circumstances operating upon the mind of a people easily excited at all times and now in a state of unusual and extreme excitation."

While the anti-Catholic members of the administration were thus deliberating, doubtful as to the advisability of taking any immediate steps, the Lord

Lieutenant, who prided himself on his friendship to the Catholics, precipitated matters by instituting proceedings against O'Connell for seditious language. The words complained of were contained in a speech delivered at the Association on 16th December. "Nations," he was reported to have said,

"had been driven mad by oppression. He hoped that Ireland would never be driven to the system pursued by the Greeks. He trusted in God they would never be so driven. He hoped Ireland would be restored to her rights; but if ever that day should arrive—if she were driven mad by persecution, he hoped that a new Bolivar might be found—that the spirit of the Greeks and that of the South Americans might animate the people of Ireland."

Such were the words of the speech as reported in *Saunders's News-Letter*. But that the Irish government should have selected especially these upon which to base a prosecution, just at the moment when England had determined formally to recognise the independence of the Spanish-American republics, was matter for general wonder. "The King," wrote Peel to Lord Liverpool, "says he sees much inconsistency in prosecuting O'Connell and afterwards recognising Bolivar." The remark, coming from the quarter it did, might be regarded as a hit at Canning rather than as expressive of any sympathy for O'Connell. But the fact that in their anxiety to strike a blow at the Association the advisers of his Excellency could find nothing in any of O'Connell's numerous speeches more savouring of encouragement

to rebellion than this passing reference to Bolivar, speaks volumes for the pacific tendency of his agitation. That no one but the blindest partisan could ever have dreamt of imputing to him anything like an appeal to arms may now be readily admitted. But the phenomenon of a peaceful agitation, of an agitation resting on constitutional grounds and appealing for its support to law-abiding citizens, was at the time so novel that no one, and least of all Government, could believe in its sincerity. The situation, too, was by no means so simple as at first sight it might appear. O'Connell had referred to Bolivar: at the same moment a rabid Orangeman, Sir Harcourt Lees by name, had published what the Chief Secretary, without exaggeration, described as a "most furious letter" to the Protestants of Ulster, calling upon them to arm against the Catholics, and announcing his intention of placing himself at their head "because the Government was so weak as to despise the danger of the Protestants and to decline supplying them with arms." This letter the law officers of the Crown pronounced a fit subject for prosecution.

The fact was, that men's minds, especially in the North where the insane ravings of one Pastorini, predicting the extirpation of all heretics in Ireland in 1825, had caught firm hold on the popular imagination, were in a state of intense excitement. The Catholic hierarchy had condemned Pastorini's prophecies; O'Connell had lifted his voice in behalf of law and order; the Association had issued a strong appeal to the peasantry to refrain from secret societies and

open violence. Could Government have allied itself with the Association, it might have been better for Ireland. But under the circumstances this was impossible. In one sense the Association was merely the Catholic Board revived. It was even more formidable than ever the Board had been. It evaded the Convention Act, and no government with any pretentions to be a government could afford to see its powers and functions usurped by a quasi-illegal society. True, the Association was on the side of law and order; its influence, felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, was a good one. But its existence *per se* was objectionable; it was an *imperium in imperio;* it usurped the office and character of a government; it inflamed the Protestants, who saw in it a formidable conspiracy against the liberties of the minority. That this was not its object, that it was essentially a peaceful association for the defence of the defenceless, was not to be believed.

Such then was the practical issue of the Marquis of Wellesley's attempt to "administer the laws." Instead of conciliating Orangemen and Catholics he had succeeded only in setting them over against each other in two hostile camps. His equestrian feat of trying to ride two horses, pulling in opposite directions, had ended in a fall to the ground. The attempt to secure the conviction of Sir Harcourt Lees failed: the prosecution of O'Connell proved a farce. The words imputed to him could not be proved against him. The one witness on whose evidence the Government rested — the reporter of *Saunders's News-Letter* — ignominiously swore he

had been asleep when the words were uttered, and on New Year's Day, 1825, the grand jury threw out the bills against him.

O'Connell's acquittal naturally added to his popularity and to the strength of the Association. The cheers that greeted him, on his next appearance, plainly told him so. But the result of the prosecution, as he reminded his audience, was not merely a personal triumph. It was a triumph for every man in the country that valued the existence of the British Constitution and estimated his privileges as a freeman. For that constitution, for those privileges, he was ready to shed his blood to the last drop. Had he not given seven hostages to the State as security for his fidelity? Had he not a profession the most abundant in its return for his labours? Had he not, independent of that profession, a property sufficient to support him in a style of independence suitable to his station as the descendant of one of the most ancient families of the land? Would he not then be the most doting driveller in existence to imagine that at his age, and under his circumstances, he could be a gainer, or that his country would be benefited, by an armed organisation of barefooted, turbulent, undisciplined peasantry, against the marshalled troops of the Empire? No, he would rather submit to the consequences of their present degradation than that a single tear should make any portion of the cup of doubtful happiness to be obtained by a national commotion. But the Association, it was said, was not to be allowed to enjoy its triumph. Even while he spoke, a rumour had reached him of

the intention of the Government to proceed against it directly. The Association, he knew, might be suppressed, but Government could hardly prohibit their assembling to dine together. The Association was the creature of the penal laws; and as long as Catholic disabilities existed, so long must the Catholics possess some organ through which to convey their complaints, to proclaim their grievances, and to demand their redress.

The rumour that Government intended to suppress the Association proved well founded. The King's speech, at the opening of Parliament on 3rd February, expressed a regret that, while the condition of the country generally showed signs of improvement, and the outrages, for the suppression of which extraordinary powers had been required, had ceased, associations existed in Ireland irreconcilable with the spirit of the constitution, and calculated, by exciting alarm and by exasperating animosity, to endanger the peace of society and retard the course of national improvement. It was remarked that it was not association, but associations in the plural, that was spoken of.

"Let not that little *s* deceive any person," said Brougham. "I know the reflection that passed through the mind of the writer. . . . However it may be intended to hold the balance even between the Catholic and Orange associations, depend upon it, it will only be a nominal equality. The Catholic Association will be strongly put down with one hand, while the Orange Association will only receive a gentle tap with the other."

The policy foreshadowed in the King's speech was

confirmed a week later by the introduction by Goulburn of a Bill for the suppression of the Catholic Association and the Orange Lodges. It was supported by Canning and Plunket, though, as Brougham predicted, it was chiefly directed against the former, rendering illegal every society constituted "for the purpose of procuring the redress of grievances in Church or State," "which shall continue their meetings for a longer time than fourteen days from their first meeting," or "which shall authorise any body or bodies to levy or receive any money or contributions from his Majesty's subjects," or "which shall administer any oaths whatever at times and places not required by law to the exclusion of persons of any form of religious faith." At the same time special care was taken to exclude from its provisions all societies formed for religious worship, or acting "merely for purposes of public or private charity, science, agriculture, manufactures, or commerce." The importance of this saving clause did not escape the notice of O'Connell.

At the first announcement of Goulburn's Bill, the Association took instant measures to be heard at the Bar of the House of Commons in their defence. On 10th February a deputation, consisting of O'Connell, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Sheil, and other influential persons, was appointed to proceed immediately to London, for the purpose of conferring with their friends in Parliament and supplying them with such information as might be useful during the impending struggle. It was with extreme reluctance that O'Connell consented to form one of the deputation.

"It is," he wrote to his wife, "a sacrifice—certainly a great sacrifice—and you must not be angry if I meet nothing but ingratitude in return. No man should ever expect gratitude from the public. I wish to God I could make my motives so pure and disinterested as to care little for gratitude or applause."

Travelling as rapidly as possible, the deputation attracted considerable attention in passing through the principal towns on their route, especially O'Connell, who in his large cloak — a survival to all appearance of the ancient Irish mantle — formed a conspicuous object on the box of the landau. At Wolverhampton they turned aside for a moment to pay their respects to Dr. Milner, whose uncompromising opposition in earlier days to the veto had won O'Connell's gratitude. With some difficulty they found the venerable prelate sitting before his kitchen fire, sipping the cup of chocolate that formed his simple breakfast. But age had obscured his recollection, and he scarcely remembered O'Connell's name. A reference to his old feud with Charles Butler brought a momentary flash into his lustre-dimmed eyes; but the visit was a melancholy one, and after a little desultory conversation the deputation took their departure. Reaching London about midday on 18th February, O'Connell took up his quarters at Cooke's Hotel, in Albemarle Street, and with his companions at once proceeded to call on Sir Francis Burdett, the new manager of the Catholic business, "an elegant gentleman, with an English coldness about him," as O'Connell described him to his wife; but "improving on acquaintance." After some conversation they

repaired in his company to the House of Commons, and being provided with seats under the gallery, O'Connell saw the Speaker measure him with his glass. Several members came up to shake hands with him; but his first impression of the "Honourable House" was not very favourable. With the exception of Peel none of those opposed to Catholic emancipation struck him as able speakers, and among their friends there was a want of zeal that was depressing. Still he was on the whole sanguine that some good would come out of their visit; and his opinion gathered strength as time went on.

Despite the advocacy of Brougham, Mackintosh, and Burdett, the House of Commons refused to hear counsel at the Bar on behalf of the Catholic Association, and on 25th February the Bill for the suppression of illegal societies in Ireland, or, as O'Connell with more force than propriety dubbed it, the "Algerine Act," passed its third reading, becoming law within a month after it had been introduced. But the unanimity with which it had passed through Parliament did not prevent those who, while they deprecated the Association itself, nevertheless sympathised with its aims, from giving expression to their opinion that the fane of the constitution was dishonoured so long as its gates were closed against millions of their fellow-subjects. In fact, instead of retarding, the "Algerine Act" rather stimulated, the cause of Emancipation. Urged by O'Connell, Burdett at once invited the House of Commons to take into its consideration the Catholic claims, and three days after the third reading of the Suppression

Bill the House, by a majority of thirteen, granted leave to introduce a Catholic Relief Bill. The result was gratifying. Provided emancipation were conceded, Parliament was welcome to suppress the Association. Nor was this the only benefit that followed from it.

During the debate on the Suppression Bill, select committees of both Houses had been appointed to consider the general condition of Ireland. On 25th February O'Connell was invited to give evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons. His examination, conducted chiefly by Sir Henry Parnell and Spring Rice, touched the increase and state of the peasantry and the conditions of land tenure in Ireland. Several pertinent questions were put to him by Lords Milton and Althorp, and during the greater part of the time Peel was in the room. O'Connell was gratified at the reception accorded him, and by the modesty of his demeanour, the clearness and moderation of his replies, afforded general satisfaction. The day following he addressed a meeting of Catholics in the Freemasons' Tavern, and spoke for three hours to an audience "as cheering and enthusiastic as ever a Dublin aggregate could be." The same evening he dined with the deputation at Lord Stourton's, occupying the place of honour, between his host and the Duke of Norfolk, and being lionised by everybody. On Sunday, the 27th, the deputation dined at Brougham's, O'Connell sitting between the Dukes of Devonshire and Leinster, and opposite the Duke of Sussex, who impressed him unfavourably. On 3rd March he presided at a large

THE OLD HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, WESTMINSTER.

FROM A COLLECTION OF LONDON ENGRAVINGS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

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charity dinner, when he was nearly crushed to death by ladies anxious to shake hands with him. The following day he was again examined before the Committee of the House of Commons on every subject relating to the Catholics of Ireland—the people, Church, friars, priests, Jesuits, etc., and had the satisfaction of hearing from Colonel Dawson, Peel's brother-in-law and member of Parliament for Derry, that he had removed many of his prejudices. A day or two afterwards he went through the same ordeal before the Lords' Committee. His examination lasted four hours, and was confined entirely to the state of the administration of justice, from the highest to the lowest jurisdiction, police included. His deportment struck Lord Colchester, who when Speaker of the House of Commons had moved the rejection of the Relief Bill of 1814, as "affectedly respectful and gentle, except in a few answers, where he displayed a fierceness of tone and aspect." Perhaps O'Connell's opinion coincided with that of Dr. Doyle, who after his examination before their lordships remarked: "Pshaw! such silly questions as they put! I think in all my life I never encountered such a parcel of old fools."

But after the success of Burdett's motion, his time was chiefly occupied in assisting to draft a Catholic Relief Bill. On 7th March, in a letter to the chairman of the moribund Catholic Association, he sketched the Bill in outline, intimating, without signifying any disapproval, that it was intended to accompany it with two subsidiary measures, the one raising the electoral franchise in the county from

forty shillings to £10, the other making provision for a State endowment of the Catholic clergy. The letter, or at any rate the gist of it, found its way into the papers, and caused much mischief. To say the least, it was precipitate and ill-advised. But in fact O'Connell, in making the communication, was wholly unaware that he was walking on brittle ice. So far as raising the electoral franchise was concerned, he was in entire agreement with the proposal, and in the face of his evidence before the House of Commons' Committee, it is ridiculous to urge that he merely acquiesced in it as the necessary price of emancipation. On the contrary, he was as anxious as every sensible man in the community to have the forty-shilling freeholders abolished. For, as the absolute slaves of the large landed proprietors, they had hitherto proved nothing but a drag on the cause of progress, swamping by their venal votes the pretensions of every independent candidate. That these despised forty-shilling freeholders would at no very distant date, in the enthusiasm of the national struggle, throw off their yoke and exercise their privileges against their masters, was what no one could have imagined.

For the other matter—the State endowment of the Catholic clergy—it was a matter which, in O'Connell's opinion, concerned them alone. For himself, granted that emancipation was conceded, he could see no harm in a proposal which would merely put them on a level with their brethren of the Established Church. "The Bishops," he wrote on 14th March, "are here, and to them are referred all questions as

to the acceptance of a provision and the details of such provision if accepted, which, without Emancipation, could not possibly be." Here, again, he did not know that he was unconsciously misinterpreting the view of the Irish hierarchy. Two days after he had written the above, Bishop Doyle was examined by the Committee of the House of Commons.

"Yesterday," notes Lord Colchester in his Diary under date 17th March, "Dr. Doyle was examined by the Committee of the House of Commons on Ireland. He positively objected to any interference of a Protestant sovereign in the nomination or recommendation or control in choice of Roman Catholic clergy as prelates or parish priests; unwilling to receive any State provision; rejecting it absolutely unless equality of civil rights were given to the Roman Catholic laity; and even then would accept such provision only as permanently annexed to each benefice or dignity."

Now it must be confessed that the natural interpretation to be placed on this paragraph is precisely what O'Connell placed on it, viz., that, if emancipation, *i. e.*, equality of civil rights for the Catholic laity, was conceded, the Catholic clergy would accept of a State provision. But this, it was soon to appear, was not the meaning attached by Bishop Doyle to his words. The misunderstanding had the disastrous effect of causing a quarrel between him and O'Connell; but while admitting that the latter possibly misinterpreted the Bishop's meaning, it must be allowed that the misinterpretation was a very natural one.

Believing, therefore, that the cause was progressing favourably and rapidly, it was with no little surprise and indignation that O'Connell, on opening his paper one morning, came across a "furious tirade" against him, charging him, amongst other things, with "surrendering his former principles," and "selling the people for a silk gown." The author of the letter, John Lawless, or, as his admirers called him, "honest Jack Lawless," figured as the Cobbett of Ireland. Though not one of the deputation, he had thought it his duty to accompany it to London in order to superintend its proceedings and to prevent any lapse on its part from good old Radical doctrines. His vigilance had not been unrewarded. He had seen, or imagined he had seen, with sorrow how the blandishments of the aristocracy had destroyed the moral backbone of the deputation, how "the Circean cup of their hospitality" had robbed O'Connell of his senses, and how in his delirium he had sacrificed the forty-shilling freeholders in the hope of personal advancement. Well for Ireland was it, in his opinion, that he, her incorruptible advocate, was at hand to raise the alarm. And there was a grain of truth in his strictures. O'Connell had indeed sacrificed the forty-shilling freeholders; but the imputation of having acted from personal motives was as ridiculous as it was indecent. Fearing, however, that the letter would cause "extreme mischief" in England, and "raise a flame in Ireland," O'Connell at once penned a reply to it, and dismissed the subject from his mind.

Early in April, between the first and second readings of the Bill, he paid a visit to Ireland, and on

14th April addressed a large aggregate meeting in Dublin. Nothing on that occasion was said about the "Wings," as the two supplementary bills for the endowment of the clergy and the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders were called, and on the return of the deputation to London it was agreed to leave them to the discretion of Government, in the expectation that by doing so the main measure would pass. On 21st April the Bill passed by 268 to 241 and was read for a third time without a division on 10th May. The hopes of the Emancipationists beat high, and it was supposed that the Lords must yield. But their hopes were doomed to disappointment. On 18th May the House of Lords, rallying to the "No Popery" speech of the Duke of York, rejected the Bill on its second reading by 178 to 130. O'Connell, who had been led to believe that it was to have been regarded as a Government measure, was indignant at the perfidy with which he had been treated by Lord Liverpool, and publicly abused him as "a half-honest man," "a driveller of Dr. Duigenan's school, who had changed his tone in consequence of the Duke of York's speech." At the same time he announced his intention of reviving the Catholic Association, promising for himself that he would always be an agitator.

On the first of June he landed at Howth. The news of his defeat had preceded him. Lawless had stirred up a spirit of opposition to his leadership; but neither had materially affected his popularity. An immense crowd was awaiting his arrival on the quay, and as he stepped ashore cheer after cheer

rent the air, hats were waved, and handkerchiefs fluttered in the breeze. All the way to Dublin the road was lined with men, women, and children cheering him as he drove homewards through their midst. At Annesley Bridge the enthusiasm redoubled itself; the horses were taken from his carriage, and he was dragged victoriously through the streets to his house in Merrion Square. Here a fresh ovation awaited him, and in response to cries for a speech he stepped on the balcony to address a few heartfelt words of thanks to them. A week later he addressed an aggregate meeting of Catholics in Anne Street chapel, "the most numerous and most enthusiastic," he thought, that had ever assembled in Dublin. As he stepped on to the platform, dressed in the uniform of the Association, in blue frock coat, with a gilt button on the shoulder, yellow vest, and white trousers, the entire audience started to its feet and cheered him for several minutes. Hardly had the cheers subsided when Lawless started up to put a resolution expressing disapproval of the conduct of the deputation in London. The indignation of the meeting was intense, and it required all O'Connell's influence to procure a hearing for him. But, recognising the futility of his attempt, Lawless wisely withdrew his motion, with the sly remark that he was glad to see O'Connell had been reconverted to his old views on the subject of the forty-shilling freeholders and the endowment of the Catholic clergy. Disdaining to notice the innuendo implied in his remark, O'Connell at once plunged into the business for which the meeting had been summoned, viz., the appointment

of a committee to consider the possibility of starting a new Association to carry on the work of the old one without infringing the provisions of the Suppression Act. A committee of twenty-one was accordingly appointed, and after sitting for fifteen days, waiting, in fact, till the prorogation of Parliament prevented the possibility of any immediate fresh legislation against them, it reported to another aggregate meeting on 13th July.

In submitting the report, O'Connell announced that the committee, while resolved "to obey a statute they could not respect," "were convinced that a new Association might be formed which would consolidate the constitutional resources of the Catholic body, without in any way infringing the Act recently passed." To accomplish this it was necessary to consider what the new law allowed, and what it did not allow. Taking the latter first: it was illegal for the new Association to concern itself with the preparation and management of petitions for the repeal of the penal laws, or for any other purposes. That could only be done by an aggregate meeting; but as the law limited the duration of such meetings to fourteen days—a period too short in which to collect the general opinion of the Catholic body—it would henceforth be necessary that aggregate meetings should be held simultaneously in every county in Ireland. As for the new Catholic Association, it was to be formed merely for the purposes of public or private charity and such other purposes as were not prohibited by the statute VI. Geo. IV., cap. 4. Its objects would be the promotion of public peace and

concord; the encouragement of an enlightened and religious system of education founded on the basis of Christian charity and perfect fair dealing; the taking of a religious census; the rendering of aid in the erection of places of Catholic worship; the promotion of improvements in agriculture and manufactures; and the diffusion of information calculated to advance the cause of religious toleration by support given to a liberal press.

It was soon to appear that under these specious pretexts not a single portion of the entire social fabric existed which it was not in the power of the Association legally to discuss. For how was public peace and concord to be promoted so long as the Orange system lasted? How was an enlightened system of education to be fostered so long as the proselytising methods of the Kildare Street schools were permitted? How were improvements to be made in agriculture so long as arbitrary ejectments, tithe-proctors, church-rates, and grand-jury presentments existed? How was religious toleration to be promoted so long as a Tory press, secretly supported by Government, was allowed to malign the Catholics and misinterpret their objects unimpeded? Even in what appeared its greatest grievance—the removal of the management of the Catholic petition out of its control—it soon appeared that instead of destroying the usefulness of the Association the "Algerine Act" had only increased its efficiency. No oaths were to be tendered as a condition of membership, and no one was to be excluded on the ground of religion. Every person who paid £1 before a certain

day was *ipso facto* a member of the Association: after that day each person paying £1 and procuring one member to propose and another to second him was likewise a member. The new Association took over the £14,000 which the old one had in hand when it was dissolved. But as it was no longer possible to connect the Rent—the mainspring of the agitation—with the Association, the management of it was, at O'Connell's suggestion, entrusted to Lord Killeen.

MEDAL STRUCK FOR O'CONNELL BY MONOP.

FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE AWAKENING OF THE NATION.

1825–1828.

O'CONNELL had kept his promise. Phœnix-like, a new Association had sprung out of the ashes of the old one, and within six months from the passing of the Insurrection Act the machinery of it was in full working order. Government, without a pretext to interfere, looked on the while in stupefied impotence. The joy of the Catholics was unbounded; their gratitude to O'Connell unstinted. A medal was struck to commemorate his services, bearing his image with the words "Erin ma vourneen," surrounded by a wreath of shamrock and oak leaves. That autumn, as he went the Munster circuit, demonstration followed demonstration. At Cork an eloquent address was presented to him, with the view of proving to his detractors that "his purity of intention and devotion to Irish interests continued unimpeached in the public estimation." At Mallow he had to plead the indifferent state of his wife's health as an excuse for evading an ovation. At Galway, where he went on a special

retainer, the city was decorated in his honour, the whole population, men, women and children, turning out to welcome him and drag his carriage in triumph within the walls. At Wexford his reception was, if possible, even more enthusiastic and more picturesque. From an early hour in the morning, the harbour was alive with gaily painted boats, the quay and bridge thronged with people in holiday attire, waiting to welcome him as he approached the town in a triumphal barge, from the stern of which floated a large green flag with the harp of Ireland emblazoned on it, manned with rowers dressed in green jackets trimmed with gold.

It was a magnificent spectacle; but, flattered though he was by it and other signs of his popularity, O'Connell was glad to escape for a time to the peaceful solitudes of his seaside home in Kerry—now really his own. For early in the year 1825 his uncle "Hunting Cap" had died at the good old age of ninety-six, bequeathing to him Darrynane and the bulk of his property, estimated at about £1000 a year. For several years before his death he had been totally blind; but age had not dimmed his mental vision. He had lived to see the foundation of the Catholic Association, and, in transmitting his subscription to the "Rent," he had predicted the speedy termination of the long struggle for freedom. His letter had been entered on the minutes of the Association; but before the promised day arrived he had been gathered to his ancestors. In September O'Connell took possession of his new home. Darrynane, a cluster of buildings of unequal shapes

and sizes rather than a single house, built at different times, and with more regard to comfort and accommodation than to architectural uniformity, is a picturesque object on the road from Cahirciveen to Kenmare. But the road itself belongs to a more recent date, and at the time of which we are speaking Darrynane was almost inaccessible to any but foot-passengers. Shut in on all sides save one by mountains rising to 1500 and 2000 feet, the house commands a full prospect of the Atlantic. To the left a rocky promontory, transformed when the tides are particularly high into an island, separates it from Ballinskelligs harbour. Scattered about on it are the ruins of the ancient abbey which gives its name to the little bay and the house itself, containing the graves of many of O'Connell's ancestors. To a stranger the scenery on the land side—a jumble of rock alternating with bog—devoid of trees, except for a small shrubbery planted by O'Connell himself, presents a rather dreary prospect; but to O'Connell it was endeared by the tenderest recollections of his childhood, and the tourist who will take the trouble to ascend Coomakista, when the early rays of the sun are flooding the ocean and lighting up the distant Skelligs, will admit that the praise he lavished on it is not wholly undeserved.

With the enthusiasm of a new proprietor, O'Connell no sooner found himself installed at Darrynane than he began altering, planting, and building in order to make the place more commodious and agreeable for his wife and family. For he was anxious to remove his establishment from Dublin thither.

DARRYNANE HOUSE, COUNTY KERRY.

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"I hope," he wrote to his wife, "I will be able to prevail on my daughters to come down very, very early next summer. It would be a very great object to me to get rid of a £1000 of my debts during the next two terms. If I were able to do that, out of my profession, I would soon be altogether free. How I long for that day, darling. Nothing, however, but some substantial remaining at Darrynane, without anything like an establishment in Dublin, will do it."

But in this he rather reckoned without his host. For Mrs. O'Connell, gentle and devoted wife though she was, had no idea of economy, or of burying either herself or her daughters in a remote corner of Kerry; and at the very moment O'Connell was scheming to retrench his expenses, her thoughts were set on viceregal receptions and the pleasures of city life. Under the circumstances, therefore, it was little wonder that his plans not only came to nothing, but that on the contrary his expenses, especially after his election to Parliament rendered residence in London for part of the year necessary, should have increased rather than diminished.

During the summer there had been somewhat of a lull in the agitation, due to the anticipation of an immediate dissolution of Parliament. But the lull did not mean stagnation. On the contrary, there had been no end of what Moore sarcastically called "oratorical brawling," in which O'Connell had taken his fair share. The fact was that, despite his persistent attempt to ignore it, "the undergrowl of poor Jack Lawless and his few and foolish partisans" was becoming daily more pronounced, and on 11th

July a meeting was convened in Bridge Street chapel, in the parish of St. Audeon's, for the purpose of denouncing O'Connell's adoption of the Wings' policy. The meeting was to have been what we should now call a ticket meeting, confined to the inhabitants of the parish. But the attempt to exclude O'Connell proved futile, and his friends having provided him with an opportunity to speak, he proceeded, amidst considerable interruption, roundly to abuse the managers of the meeting for their attempt to sow dissensions among the Catholics and afford a triumph to their enemies. Having vented his indignation he continued :

"Mr. Chairman, I have received votes of thanks from almost every county of Ireland. They are the greatest pride and consolation of my heart ; and I do trust that my conduct has never been such as to annul any claim, if not to the gratitude, at least to the approval of my country. I saw there was a prospect of achieving the liberty of Ireland by means at which and under other circumstances I should have shuddered with horror. But I did not rest on my own authority. I was in communication with two prelates who are the ornament of Ireland—Dr. Doyle and Dr. Murray. Can I offer a better plea than when I say that I did nothing, said nothing, that had not their entire concurrence and sanction? . . . With regard to the measure affecting the freeholders, I am sensible that that has been injurious, and has retarded our progress. I know that it has been rather a dead-weight to impede us, than a wing to help us on ; and no man is more ready to condemn its effect, or deplore its introduction, than I am. I am conscious it has done us a dis-service, and therefore I shall be the

first to oppose its reintroduction, if it should be attempted at any future time."

In conclusion he regretted to have spoken in rather a rambling fashion; but it was new for him, in Catholic affairs, to speak on sufferance, and he trusted that the example of St. Audeon's parish, however respectable otherwise, would not be followed in trying to exclude the free expression of opinion at Catholic meetings.

His renunciation of the Wings soothed public opinion and, as he expressed it, smashed the Bridge Street gang. But it is said that when Dr. Doyle's attention was drawn to the paragraph attributing to him and Dr. Murray responsibility for the adoption of the Wings, he wept like a child, and at his request Dr. Kinsella, the president of Carlow College, published a long letter disavowing the charge. The disavowal surprised and mortified O'Connell. Hitherto, he wrote in reply, either the natural elasticity of his animal spirits or some other cause had prevented him from being affected by any of the attacks, whether open or insidious, that had been made upon him, until he found himself so unnecessarily assailed from a quarter to which he had fondly looked for friendship, protection, and patronage. Even with Kinsella's letter before him, he failed to grasp Dr. Doyle's position, and having at a public dinner recurred to the matter, Dr. Doyle felt it incumbent on him to explain himself more precisely in the following words:

"What my opinion was I declared in London to my right reverend brethren; I repeated it since in Dublin:

that if the prelates were led to approve of a provision emanating from the Treasury—if the ministers of Christ were to be paid by the minister of state for dispensing the mysteries of God—then, in that case, I would not create dissension amongst them ; but sooner than that my hand should be soiled by it, I would lay down my office at the feet of Him who conferred it, for if my hand were to be stained with government money it should never grasp a crozier, or a mitre ever afterwards be fitted to my brow. This was, and is my fixed determination."

It is impossible to doubt Doyle's sincerity, though his language before the Committee of the House of Commons conveyed no such strong determination. Feeling, however, that he had been in the wrong, though scarcely understanding why, O'Connell made overtures for a reconciliation, and the bishop having accepted the proffered hand the controversy terminated in mutual professions of respect.

But O'Connell, though he had cried *peccavi* and done public penance for his sin, was by no means convinced of the error of his ways ; and the fact that the Marquis of Waterford had recently, in prospect of the general election, added largely to the forty-shilling freeholders on his estate, seemed proof positive in favour of their disfranchisement. But it was no use trying to swim against the stream, and with the example of the veto before him, he saw that if he was to guide public opinion he must not directly oppose it. He was shortly to be convinced of the wisdom as well as the expediency of having yielded.

On 24th October the new system of provincial meetings, for the discussion of grievances and the

preparation of petitions, was inaugurated at Limerick. It proved eminently successful, and on 16th January, 1826, it was followed up by a fourteen-days' meeting in the Association Rooms in Dublin. Petitions were prepared and presented to Parliament ; but the near approach of the general election deprived the session of all interest, and moreover it was felt to be undesirable to expose the English Liberal members to the temptation, as Sheil expressed it, of endeavouring "to save their seats by votes given in the spirit of a death-bed repentance." On these grounds, therefore, it was thought wiser to postpone the discussion of the Catholic claims, and to try if possible to increase the strength of the party at the hustings. Parliament was dissolved in May, and the struggle began at once. Nowhere in Ireland was it expected to be fiercer than in county Waterford, where a determined effort was to be made to wrest the representation out of the hands of the Beresford family.

The way of it was this. Shortly after the "Bottle Riot" a number of Catholic gentlemen belonging to the county had requisitioned the High Sheriff to summon a meeting for the purpose of passing a vote of condolence with the Lord-Lieutenant, the Marquis of Wellesley. The Sheriff with the counsel, if not by the direction, of the Marquis of Waterford, had refused to comply with their requisition. But several other magistrates had stepped forward ; the meeting had been held, and the vote of condolence passed. As usual, the gratitude of the Catholics was excessive. A banquet was given to the "twelve

honest Protestant magistrates," and before the party broke up it was resolved to visit their indignation on the Marquis of Waterford by running an opposition candidate to Lord George Beresford. A neighbouring proprietor, Mr. Villiers Stuart, afterwards Lord Stuart of the Decies, was invited to contest the constituency in the Liberal interest. The invitation reached him while travelling in the Tyrol, but accepting it he returned home immediately and threw himself heart and soul into the struggle. No one dreamed that he would be successful. The majority on the books against him was more than six hundred; people smiled or sneered at the ridiculousness of the attempt; his own agents gave him little hope; the Association was silent, not wishing to injure itself by embarking in a hopeless adventure; and even O'Connell, whom he had at once retained as his legal adviser, with a six-hundred-guinea fee, regarded the prospect with despondency, and defeat as a foregone conclusion.

How, indeed, could it prove otherwise? In wealth and political influence the Beresford family was second to none in Ireland. For seventy years and more they had ruled the county of Waterford with unquestioned authority, looking upon the representation of it as their own peculiar right and privilege. In the days preceding the Union the name of Beresford had been one to conjure with. One of them, plain John Beresford, but better known as the "King of Ireland," the father of the present Marquis, had defied and defeated one of the most popular viceroys that Ireland had ever seen — Earl Fitzwilliam. Their

arrogance had only been equalled by their rapacity, and there was hardly an office of any pecuniary advantage in the State which they had not monopolised. The Union had reduced their influence within straiter limits, and they had seen with chagrin one department after another withdrawn from their grasp. But even now, with powers curtailed and privileges diminished, their authority within the limits of the county was only rivalled by the ducal house of Cavendish. The head of the family, the Marquis of Waterford, was an amiable, narrow-minded autocrat, with few personal animosities and many political prejudices. Individually he was not disliked. On the contrary, he had certain solid claims on the esteem and affection of the Catholics. As Lord Tyrone he had in 1793 introduced the Bill for their relief into the House of Commons, and his humanity, as commander of the Waterford regiment, during the rebellion of 1798, had gained for him the honourable title of "the Croppy Colonel." His brother, Lord George Beresford, the actual sitting member, was in many respects his exact counterpart, with a touch of aristocratic languor added to his composition that would have led him, had it been possible, to avoid the *dura necessitas* of the hustings. But, certain as his re-election appeared, nothing had been left to chance. Long before the dissolution of Parliament had occurred, steps had been taken to cultivate the good-will of the tenantry. Leases had been granted, arrears of rent forgiven, and money to the extent of over £4000, it is said, expended in improvements. Lastly, the neutrality of the Duke of Devonshire had been obtained,

and when Villiers Stuart entered the field it seemed as if he was courting certain defeat. For who could have imagined that these despised forty-shilling freeholders, with whom the verdict rested, would have had the courage to throw off their ancient servility and defy their masters? Who could have believed that these miserable peasants, steeped in poverty and ignorance, — mere beasts of the field, "cattle," as they were indeed humorously called, — driven to the polling booths with the same passive indifference as oxen were driven to the shambles, should ever have dared to revolt, and, regardless of the consequences, have by one supreme effort shown themselves worthy to exercise the privileges they possessed? Who could have foreseen that this election was to mark the beginning of a new era in the history of Ireland; that after a century of oppression the nation was at last awakening from its long slumber?

Certainly not O'Connell, as, the spring assizes over, he proceeded somewhat despondently to Waterford to fulfil his engagement as counsel to Villiers Stuart. Nevertheless, it was not long before he became conscious that some more subtle influences than were commonly due to the excitement of an election contest were at work amongst the masses of the people. Not only was the enthusiasm with which he and Villiers Stuart were greeted, as they made the round of the constituency, greater than he had ever before witnessed, but there was a ring of sincerity about it, and a look of determination in the faces of the peasantry that he had never heard nor seen before. The following extracts from

letters written on the spot to his wife help to bring the scene more vividly before us.

"DROMANA, 19th June, 1826.

". . . As to yesterday . . . we heard an early mass at Waterford, and then started for Dungarvan. We breakfasted at Kilmacthomas, a town belonging to the Beresfords, but the people belong to us. They came out to meet us with green boughs, and such shouting as you can have no idea of. I harangued them from the window of the inn, and we had a good deal of laughing at the Beresfords. Judge what the popular feeling must be, when in this, a Beresford town, every man their tenant, we had such a reception. A few miles further on we found a chapel, with the congregation assembled before mass. The Priest made me come out, and I addressed his flock, being my second speech. The freeholders here are the tenants of a Mr. Palliser, who is on the adverse interest, but almost all of them will vote for us. We then proceeded to Dungarvan on the coast. There are here about four hundred voters *belonging* to the Duke of Devonshire. His agents have acted a most treacherous part by us, and our committee at Waterford were afraid openly to attack these voters lest the Duke should complain of our violating what he calls his neutrality. But I deemed that all sheer nonsense, and to work we went. We had a most tremendous meeting here ; we harangued the people from a platform erected by the walls of the new chapel. I never could form a notion of the great effect of popular declamation before yesterday. The clergy of the town most zealously assisted. We have, I believe, completely triumphed, and I at present am convinced we shall poll to the last man of these voters. We then had a public dinner and great

speeching. We broke up about nine, and Wyse and I came here with Mr. Stuart in his carriage. We arrived about half after ten, and are going this day to Lismore on another mission."

"WATERFORD, 21st June, 1826.

". . . The election of Stuart *now* appears to me *quite certain*. I took my former opinion from timid persons here; my present is founded on actual experience. The Priests have gained over a sufficient number of the *adverse* voters to insure us a decided majority. We have already in town a sufficient number of the enemy's forces to decide the victory. When I wrote last on Monday I was at Dromana. We started soon after for Cappoquin and Lismore, through the loveliest scenes in nature. I was with Stuart in his own chaise, with four horses, but we had no great occasion, for they were taken off before we got to Cappoquin, and we were drawn by freeholders three miles into Lismore. I never had a notion of popular enthusiasm till I saw that scene. There were thousands covering the precipitous banks of the Blackwater at Lismore. The chapel is extremely spacious. It was crowded to suffocation. We made several harangues, and your husband was as usual much cheered; but, what was better, the freeholders crowded in, and put down their names in groups, and they are all now arriving in shoals. The Duke of Devonshire was to have been *neutral*, but I believe I have helped to put an end to his absurd notion of neutrality."

Naturally, this carrying of the war into their own country was not relished by the territorial magnates. It was an "encroachment on the rights of private property," most "ungentlemanly," and the like.

But it was the interference of the priests in the election that roused their indignation to boiling-point. The agents of Lord George put forth two addresses reviling them, and calling on the people to spurn their superstitious claims. The addresses were immediately adopted by the opposite party and left to preach their own moral. The attack on the priests made their work easier, and decided the contest. The Duke of Devonshire sent a steamer up the Blackwater to bring his tenants in a body to Waterford, hoping thereby to prevent their becoming infected with the popular mania. O'Connell harangued their wives and sweethearts on the danger of embarking in a "tea-kettle," and the steamer returned to Waterford without a single tenant on board. Next day the polling began at Waterford. After the two candidates had been proposed in due form, a grey-haired old man, of the name of Casey, rose and proposed Daniel O'Connell as a fit and proper person to represent the county in Parliament. It was a preconcerted arrangement, in order to give him the opportunity of speaking from the hustings. But the effect was electrical. A roar of indignation burst from the supporters of Lord George, but it was drowned by the triumphant cheers of their opponents, and there were those who, in the light of subsequent events, thought that had O'Connell persisted he might then and there have anticipated the victory reserved for Clare two years later. As it was, after speaking for two hours, he concluded, to the evident relief of Stuart himself, with an assurance that he did not wish to disturb the *unanimity*

of the county, and should accordingly withdraw his pretensions.

The result of the first day's polling practically settled the fate of the Beresfords. Each day only added to their discomfiture; their defeat became a rout, and the battle, which they had so confidently expected to win, was lost simply through the desertion of their own forces. The freeholders of Kilmacthomas and Portlaw, the very pick of their tenantry, claimed the privilege of being the first to head the revolt, and their claim was allowed. Their example was infectious, and far from needing to stimulate the enthusiasm of the voters, the only difficulty was to keep it within legal bounds. But though Waterford was crowded with strangers, better order had never been seen in the town. The butchers, the most turbulent portion, it might be conceived, of the community, formed themselves into a society for the preservation of the peace, and dividing the town into walks patrolled it each night in parties of six with white wands so long as the election lasted, sending home to their respective abodes every freeholder whom they met rambling about after eleven o'clock. After resorting to every artifice to lengthen out the time, Lord George withdrew on the fifth day from the contest, which had cost his family at least £100,000. As for the Marquis of Waterford, who had long been in a declining state of health, he never recovered from his defeat, and, unable to bear his disgrace, shortly afterwards quitted Curraghmore for ever. The defection of his own household had wounded him most of all, and a pa-

thetic story was told by Sheil how, on being informed that his favourite huntsman, Manton, had voted for the opposition candidate, he caused him to be summoned to his bedside. "Manton," said he, "have you, too, abandoned me?" "God bless your lordship, and long life to you," sobbed the old retainer. "I would go to the world's end to serve you; but I cannot vote against my country and my religion."

The revolt of the forty-shilling freeholders was not confined to Waterford. In Louth, Monaghan, Armagh, and Westmeath similar scenes occurred and similar victories were recorded. Astonishment seized the nation. The joy of the Catholics was only equalled by the rage of the Orangemen. Both alike saw that the goal was in sight. But if Emancipation was certain, it was also certain that the means by which it had been achieved would be destroyed. The policy of 1793—of giving with the one hand and taking away with the other — would be repeated. The forty-shilling freeholders were doomed.

The unsatisfactory state of his wife's health, and the necessity of clearing off arrears of professional business, obliged O'Connell the moment the election was over to return to Dublin. No one had been more surprised than he at the independence displayed by the forty-shilling freeholders, and he was anxious, as he expressed it, "to read his recantation" on that subject before the contest for the county of Dublin was decided. It was true he had consented before the election to waive his opinion from a desire not to oppose the wish of the nation, but he was now, he declared, convinced that the nation had been right

and himself wrong. His judgment was no longer on that subject what it had been. The delusion under which he had laboured was gone for ever. The forty-shilling freeholders had emancipated themselves from their political thraldom, and burst the bonds and fetters which had previously held them in slavery. Not to return them thanks for the boundless patriotism which they had everywhere exhibited would be doing them a great wrong and insulting his own judgment. He should therefore move "that we deem it our duty, publicly and solemnly to declare that we will not accept of emancipation accompanied by any infringement of the forty-shilling franchise." A week or two later he went with his wife to Darrynane. At Cahirciveen his tenants had assembled in a body to welcome him home, and taking the horses from his carriage insisted on dragging it, probably more to their own gratification than to the comfort of its occupants, over bog and boulder all the way to Darrynane.

But the pleasures of rural life and the joys of hare-hunting were shortly interrupted by more serious matters. The victory of the forty-shilling freeholders had been dearly purchased. Vengeance terrible and swift had fallen on them. Advantage was taken of unpaid arrears of rent: tenants were ejected at a minute's notice without mercy; whole families turned out to starve on the highways—in short, every engine that wounded pride and disappointed ambition could suggest was put in action against these unfortunate and too independent forty-shilling freeholders. So acute was the distress occasioned in

many parts by these ruthless proceedings that serious apprehensions were entertained of a recurrence of those acts of personal retaliation and agrarian crime which had at all times been so anxiously identified by their enemies with the Catholic cause. Towards the latter end of August a provincial meeting was held at Waterford to celebrate the recent victory. The proceedings included a public dinner, which Earl Fitzwilliam, "the great and good," honoured with his presence. The main topic of conversation was naturally the forty-shilling freeholders. Much sympathy was expressed for their fate; but it was reserved for O'Connell to make the only practical suggestion for their relief. What was wanted was of course money—money to enable distressed tenants to pay up their outstanding "gales," or arrears of rent, and avoid ejectment. Had the "Algerine Act" not scotched the Catholic Rent there would, said O'Connell, have been no difficulty about the matter. He therefore suggested the formation of a new organisation or voluntary association of Irishmen "for purposes legal and useful to Ireland." An "Order of Liberators" should be established, having the following for its objects:—to prevent the formation or continuance of secret societies; to conciliate all classes of Irishmen in one bond of brotherhood and affection; to bury in total and eternal oblivion all ancient animosities and reproaches; to prevent the future occurrence of feuds and riots at markets, fairs, and patrons; to promote the collection of a national fund for national purposes, as far as that can be done consistently with law; to protect all persons possessed

of the elective franchise, and especially the forty-shilling freeholders, from all vindictive proceedings on account of the free exercise of such franchise; to promote the acquisition of such franchise and its due registry; to ascertain the number of votes in each county and city of Ireland, and the political bias of the voters generally; to promote a system of dealing exclusively with the friends of civil and religious liberty, to promote the exclusive use of articles the growth and manufacture of Ireland; to form two distinct tribunals in every county, with branches in every town and village therein—the one for the purpose of reconciling differences and procuring parties to adjust their litigations and disputes, the other for the purpose of deciding, by arbitration, litigations and disputes between parties who may resist a settlement without arbitration.

The association, which was to be open to anyone not belonging to a secret society, was to consist of three grades, viz.—Liberators *par excellence*, to which rank everyone who had performed one act of real service to his country was entitled; knights companions, who had performed two acts of service; knights grand-cross who had performed three acts of service. There was to be a chancellor and a bishop attached to the order, and the grand master was to be the Earl of Cloncurry. O'Connell's own claims for admission were: first, having served Ireland for twenty-seven years; second, having formed the Association of 1823; and, third, having organised the Catholic Rent. One is tempted to smile at the formal precision with which he elaborated his plan; but in this

he knew quite well what he was about, and did not miscalculate the practical value of an appeal to his countrymen's imagination and love of theatrical display.

"On Wednesday," he wrote the following Saturday, 2nd September, to his wife, "I quietly installed my Liberators. They will make a noise yet. You would laugh to hear the multitude of wiseacres I had advising me on that subject. My brother John was one of those who think I do not know what I am about in politics. How much I mind their sapient advice! The Liberators will do yet."

He was not mistaken in his forecast, and, for himself, the title of "Liberator," to which subsequent events imparted a more intensive meaning, is still the one by which he is best known.

But all this elaborate scheme was merely preparatory to his main object — the establishment of a new Rent for the protection of the forty-shilling freeholders. It was a favourite remark of his that he had taught Irishmen to consult the state of the money market in the newspaper before turning to the political news. In fact, no one ever estimated money as a factor in politics more highly than did he. It was the mainspring of his whole agitation. Accordingly, he had no sooner established his "Order of Liberators" than he issued a stirring appeal "to the people of Ireland" to assist him in forming a new Rent. The question he had to put to every reflecting Catholic was—Are the forty-shilling freeholders, after having displayed a devotedness of resolution, and a single-heartedness of

purpose, of which they could have seen few examples in the wealthier classes, to be abandoned to the vengeance of their exasperated landlords? The persecution, he reminded his readers, was already raging in many quarters.

"In Westmeath, the tenants on the estate of that unrelenting enemy of ours, Lord Castlemaine, are distrained for the May rent. Men, who owe no part of the last November gale, require nothing but a temporary advance in order to enable them to bear up against legal persecution. Catholics of Ireland, can any proposition be more clear than this—we are bound by every tie of interest, honour, good-feeling, and conscience, to afford all practical protection to the freeholders who have achieved our recent victories? If that protection be not extended to them, it shall not be my fault. It can easily be afforded them. Let no man be deterred by the mean and pusillanimous assertion that it is impossible to protect so many. They can all be easily protected. But even if we were not able to protect more than some, yet it would be our sacred duty to protect that some. But I rejoice to say we can protect all. The mode of protecting them is by forming a fund to advance loans to all those against whom the vengeance of the landlords shall be directed. . . . But resources are wanting. Money, the life-spring of all public exertions, is wanting. Individual subscriptions can never be sufficient. It requires a national effort: it requires the revival of the Catholic Rent. Once before at my voice that fund was created. Once before all Ireland became responsive to the call of patriotism. . . . The Catholic people of Ireland are a nation. They should have something in the nature of a national

treasury. As long as the law separates us from our Protestant fellow-countrymen, so long we must have a fund to meet the necessary expenditures which grow out of our separate and most anomalous state in society. For these purposes, I call upon the Catholics and the Liberal Protestants in Ireland to form a national fund, to be called "the new Catholic Rent," for all purposes not prohibited by law, and especially for the purpose of national education. Let that be the title of the new Rent. Who will begin to collect it? . . . . Who will begin in his parish? Clergyman or layman, whoever he be, glory to him! If only one begins, the example, as before, will spread far and wide, and we shall exhibit the noble example of a national tax, voluntarily assessed and cheerfully paid. The Catholic clergy in Armagh, Monaghan, Louth, Westmeath, and Waterford have set a heroic example. How many a generous heart in other counties has felt a patriotic envy at the better fate of those who could take a share in the actual contest? It was and is, a noble emulation. Well, then, here is an opportunity which comes home to the door of every Catholic clergyman in every county in Ireland. He may, by his exertions for this Rent, become a Liberator like his fellow-countryman in Waterford or Westmeath, Louth or Cavan, Monaghan or Armagh."

The nation responded to his call. Within a week or two after the publication of the letter the "New Rent" had risen to £200. Nor was O'Connell disappointed in its effects. The "Order of Liberators" welded itself immediately and imperceptibly on to the machinery of the Association. Ejectments became rarer as the landlords found their conduct exposed

to hostile criticism and their attacks on their tenants met by retaliatory measures for the purchasing up of outstanding judgments against themselves. The principle of arbitration slowly but surely gained ground, greatly to the benefit of the tenant. Finding themselves supported by the whole forces of the Association, the forty-shilling freeholders plucked up courage to assert their privileges, and there was little doubt that, with ordinary exertions, the Catholics would return three-fourths of the representation of Ireland at the next ensuing election.

Parliament met in November. The King's Speech contained no reference to Ireland. So it was remarked Brougham, on the eve of the war with America; when America was the word which hung upon the quivering lip of every man, no allusion was made to it in the Speech from the Throne. A fourteen-days' meeting held in Dublin in January, 1827, resolved to petition Parliament, and on 5th March Sir Francis Burdett moved "that this House is deeply impressed with the necessity of taking into immediate consideration the laws inflicting penalties on his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, with the view of removing them." The motion was opposed by Peel, and lost by 276 to 272. O'Connell, who was at Ennis when the news reached him, considered it the most signal defeat which had befallen Ireland since the Union.

"Another crime," he wrote to the Secretary of the Association, "has been added to those which England has inflicted on this wretched land; another instance of genuine Reformation bigotry has disgraced the British

nation. But a just and good God is looking on, and in His own good time will be His own avenger. I agree with those who totally refuse to despair. We must rally for a new exertion. . . . We must renew our petitions to the Houses of Parliament. We must have another debate immediately after Easter : we must never let the question rest. . . . Strong measures should now be resorted to — as strong as are consistent with legal and constitutional limits. A Petition for the Repeal of the Union should be immediately prepared. There are but few patriots among the Irish Protestants, but the few there are would join us in that ; or if not, let us petition alone for the repeal of a measure which has increased every evil Ireland has endured, and taken away every prospect of a mitigation of the causes of the poverty and wretchedness of the country."

His letter broaching the repeal of the Union caused something approaching to consternation among the more moderate members of the Association, and O'Connell had to thank the pertinacity of his quondam adversary, Lawless, that the chairman, Sir Thomas Esmonde, did not succeed in suppressing it.

But just as the hopes of the Catholics had touched their nadir the whirligig of events sent them up again into the seventh heaven. In March an apoplectic stroke, depriving him of the power of speech, compelled the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, after having held the reins of government for fifteen years, to resign office. His successor, Canning, "the minister of representative Europe," as he was styled, had long shown himself a friend to the

Catholics. He could not, as he said, after all, forget that he was an Irishman. And though emancipation was still understood to be an open question, the withdrawal of the Duke of Wellington, Lord Eldon, Peel, and Lord Bathurst, and the substitution of Lamb for Goulburn as Secretary for Ireland, were signs which no one under the circumstances was likely to misinterpret. But Canning, while he regarded emancipation as a just demand, the concession of which was likely to be fraught with essential benefit to the empire, had no desire, as he expressed it, "to provoke even for that purpose the sort of passive resistance which might, he feared, be aroused in Great Britain." On the contrary, he was anxious to postpone the entire discussion of it till both sides were prepared "to take a more rational view of the subject." Party passion must be allayed in England; the agitation in Ireland must cease, and time be afforded to consider the question rationally and philosophically. The idea bewrayed the man.

O'Connell, to whom Canning's views had been communicated by the Knight of Kerry, replied to the latter,—

"I received your *quieting* letter, and, of course, gave it the most unaffected consideration. But you will recollect that the question does not rest with me. *I* can easily be *quieted*, but there are the people at large; there is the Irish nation kept in the miserable state of hope deferred. . . . You know perfectly well that this country has been governed for the last twenty years by the triumvirate of Lord Manners, Saurin, and Gregory,

and they still continue to govern. They brought Ireland to the very verge of a sanguinary struggle. If the system were pursued without hope of alteration for one year more, there never yet was so bitter or so bloody a contest in this country, often as it has been stained with blood. And the first step to bring us back to peaceable courses would be to deprive those of power who were the prime movers of discontent and the most prominent causes of irritation. . . . The country remains in a feverish state, and it requires to be soothed by a change of system, which cannot possibly take place without a change of men."

In a word, good government was what O'Connell wanted, — just and impartial administration of existing laws, — a guarantee that they would not be twisted according to the prejudices of those who had the execution of them. That granted, emancipation could wait, the repeal of the Union could wait, until time had demonstrated the utility or necessity of either or both. Not separation, not exclusion, was what he desired, but a real union with admission into the privileges of the constitution. A reasonable demand it might be called. The pity of it was that under the circumstances this equality before the law for which he asked was even more difficult to attain than either emancipation or the repeal of the Union. For it meant more than either. It meant the turning back the hands of the clock of history for at least two centuries; it meant the obliteration of every cause that divided Ireland into two hostile camps; it meant the practically impossible. Sooner would the lion lie down in peace with

the lamb, than the Orangeman admit the equality of the Catholic. The penal laws and the Union were merely the sign and symbol of an anomalous state of affairs, having its roots in religious discord and conquest by confiscation.

An oligarchical government must rest on force for its ultimate sanction. To the oligarchy in Ireland the Union implied the might of England. This was their sanction. And the thing to be remarked is that *de facto* ever since the day when Henry VIII. planned the conquest of Ireland by "politic shifts and amiable persuasions" this sanction has never been wanting. The Act of Union in itself was no new thing. In one shape or other it had always existed. Ireland for the last three and a half centuries has never been independent. Not even the nominal independence of the Irish Parliament between 1782 and 1800 can conceal the fact; for during these eighteen years England, through her Home Secretary and her English executive in Dublin Castle, had never for one moment relaxed her hold on the island. The rescinding of the Act of Union means nothing if it means only the restoration of pre-existing conditions: it means revolution and perhaps bloodshed, if it means the withdrawal of England from the connection. Out of revolution will issue a normal state of affairs; but if statesmanship counts for anything, its highest office is to achieve this normal state of affairs without a bloody revolution. So long, however, as an oligarchy continued to govern Ireland the impartial administration of the laws was simply impossible. For it was through the maladministration

of them—through jury-packing, political judges, one-sided proclamations, and the like—that it managed to maintain its authority. It kept the letter but broke the spirit, and England was there to see that the letter of the law was obeyed. O'Connell, as we shall see, was condemned in Ireland and acquitted by the House of Lords. Still, it must be admitted that a change of men offered some chance of alleviation. It was some relief that men grown hoary in twisting the laws to political ends, like Saurin and Norbury, should be superseded by less bigoted men. The only question for a responsible statesman bound to maintain the Union was, how far such a change of men might go without endangering the whole fabric. It was the thin end of the wedge, and O'Connell knew it. Hence his persistent demand for a change of system; hence his offer to drop his agitation for Emancipation at one time, and for Repeal at another.

Unfortunately, before it was possible to test the scope and intention of Canning's policy, his death early in August put an end to his administration. His death was a grievous blow to the Catholics. "We have," said O'Connell, "lost a powerful friend: the mothers of Irish children have lost a protector; and the blessings which under his administration we hoped soon to enjoy are now suddenly hurried from us and shew but like a dim and distant vision." After a brief interregnum, during which the reins that had fallen from Canning's hand were held by Lord Goderich, Wellington formed his famous administration. Of necessity the Catholic

agitation immediately recommenced. In January, 1828, there was a fourteen-days' meeting in Dublin for the purpose of petitioning Parliament. Nor was this all. A suggestion of Sheil's that simultaneous meetings should be held on one particular day in every parish in Ireland for the purpose of supporting the petition was put into execution. Accordingly, on the same day, and at the same hour, Sunday, 21st January, meetings were held in upwards of fifteen hundred Catholic churches, and the Dublin *Evening Post* calculated, "on the presumption of one thousand persons having attended each meeting (certainly a moderate average), that not less than one million five hundred thousand persons were simultaneously assembled for the same object on this impressive occasion." "Impressive," it might well be called, when it was recollected that each of these 1,500,000 men had obeyed the simple fiat of the Association. What, it was asked by attentive observers, would happen if the Association ordered them to meet with arms in their hands? So long as O'Connell maintained his authority such a command would never issue. But it was a threat *in terrorem* which the Duke of Wellington was not likely to undervalue. The Association had shown its strength: it was for ministers to estimate the probability and consequences of a collision.

For the Association itself this extraordinary exhibition of its own power had the effect of still further stimulating its exertions. In one respect its operation had disappointed O'Connell's expectations. The £50,000 annual Rent upon which he had,

at its first institution, so confidently counted had never once been realised. At most it had amounted to barely the half, and then only in consequence of special exertions. The reason of it was plain. The collection had been left too much to individual exertion. In order to systematise it O'Connell now suggested the appointment of two Catholic churchwardens in each parish. A set of rules was drawn up for their guidance, in furnishing short monthly reports of the progress of the Rent and the Census; the attitude of the landlords toward their tenantry, in regard to ejectments for non-payment of rent or the exercise of the franchise; the amount paid for tithes, church cess, etc.; the establishment of Kildare Place schools, and the progress of proselytism in their respective neighbourhoods. Further, in order to stimulate an interest in the general progress of the movement, a *Weekly Register* was sent down to each of the churchwardens every Saturday, containing the amplest report of the speeches and resolutions of the Tuesday and Thursday meetings of the Association. These it was the duty of the churchwardens to read aloud each Sunday at the chapel door and then to file. The institution of the churchwardens gave an immense impetus to the political education of the nation. Shortly before the dissolution of the Association it was calculated that six thousand copies of the *Register* were sent every week into the country. The nation had become a nation of politicians: not a single chapel which had not its lecturer, not a single lecturer who had not thousands for his audience.

Yet a further development remains to be recorded in the establishment of Liberal clubs in every county and parish. The idea originated with Thomas Wyse, the historian of the Catholic Association, by which it was immediately adopted. The elements of the system already existed in the parochial committees for arbitration. The object was to bring them into closer touch with the central organisation in Dublin. To effect this it was proposed: first, that the Association should continue the head club, committee, or association; second, that in each county there should be established a similar association or club under the immediate control of the Association; third, that in each parish there should be formed a similar club under the immediate control of the county club—thus rising by just gradations, chain linked within chain, from a group of peasants in the lowest hamlet in the land, until at last it terminated in the full assembly of the Catholic Association. Before long Liberal clubs sprang into existence in every county in Munster, and in most counties in Leinster and Connaught. The parishes followed the example of their respective counties, and in an incredibly short time the Catholics of Ireland were provided with a system of representation more complete and infinitely more useful than was furnished by Parliament itself. The extension of constitutional knowledge, the propagation of liberal feeling amongst all classes of the community, the suppression of religious feuds and private quarrels, and above all the most exact obedience to the very letter of the law—these were the objects of the institution. What

inestimable benefits to the country at large it might have been productive of, had it been allowed to perfect itself, one can only imagine. Before that day arrived, Catholic emancipation had been conceded and the Association had been dissolved. As it was, the parish clubs were of infinite service in promoting the political education of the nation, in stimulating inquiry on all subjects touching the welfare of the country, in promoting a better feeling between tenant and landlord, and in smoothing away causes of irritation amongst the peasantry themselves. What causes of dispute the parish was unable to redress were referred to the county, and by the county to the Association.

Naturally the anti-Catholics were not slow to take a leaf out of the Association's book. They already possessed in the Orange Society an engine of formidable strength; but there were many Protestants to whom the constitution of that society was objectionable. The foundation of a Brunswick Club was accordingly started in Dublin, with affiliated branches throughout the country. The name was somewhat infelicitous: its principles somewhat uncertain. But it signified opposition to the Catholic claims, and the maintenance of the Protestant ascendancy. It prided itself on the fact that it was composed of "gentlemen," and that its operations were purely defensive. In both respects it laboured under a disadvantage well known to those who have had anything to do with practical politics. For your "gentleman," however resolute and independent he may be in his individual capacity, soon grows tired

of wasting his time attending meetings and committees. It is your shoemaker, your baker, your grocer, to whom such meetings come as a form of amusement that keep the machine going. Then again, to be always acting on the defensive is in itself ineffably wearisome, and unless the stakes are very high defeat is a foregone conclusion. So it was with the Brunswick clubs. After a brief period of activity the attendance at them dwindled to nothing, and finally the whole thing expired of inanition.

Meanwhile the Catholic Association, in the exuberance of its newly discovered strength, announced its determination to consider any member of Parliament an enemy to Ireland who should support any administration not making emancipation a Cabinet question. It was to be called upon to make good its determination at an earlier period than it had anticipated on passing the resolution.

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CHAPTER X.

EMANCIPATION.

1828–1829.

LIKE Canning's administration, that of the Duke of Wellington was composed of heterogeneous elements, including both emancipationists and anti-emancipationists. The only difference was that whereas in Canning's the former had been the stronger, in Wellington's the balance of power lay with the latter. Emancipation itself was nominally left an open question. In Ireland, the Lord Lieutenant, the Marquis of Anglesey, and the Chief Secretary, William Lamb, afterwards Viscount Melbourne, were appointments of Canning, continuing to retain office in the new administration. The former was regarded as neutral; the latter as inclined to the side of the Catholics. In the Cabinet itself the Canningites were represented by Huskisson, Secretary for the Colonies, "a pale copy of his illustrious chief," together with Palmerston, Grant, and Dudley. They were opposed by Wellington, Peel, Aberdeen, Lyndhurst, Bathurst, Goulburn, and Herries. It was hardly to be expected that a

Cabinet so composed would work together harmoniously; but curiously enough, it was not over the Catholic question that the rupture occurred. In fact, on 8th May, after a three-days' debate, the House of Commons agreed by 272 to 260 to a resolution brought forward by Sir Francis Burdett to take the Catholic claims into consideration, and eleven days later the House of Lords, on the motion of the Duke of Wellington, consented to appoint a committee to confer with the Commons on the subject. While the matter was still under consideration — in fact, on the very day that the Lords had agreed to Wellington's motion — the question of transferring the East Retford franchise to Birmingham came up for consideration before the House of Commons. Huskisson, who had pledged himself in favour of the proposal, but had been unable to carry the Cabinet with him, found himself placed in the disagreeable position either of having to break his public pledge or of voting against his colleagues. Unable to decide, he saw Peel and the rest vote against the motion without being able to leave his seat. The same evening he placed his resignation in the Prime Minister's hand, and was not a little surprised and mortified to find it accepted. His resignation was followed a few days later by that of Dudley, Grant, Palmerston, and Lamb.

In the reconstruction of the administration that thereupon took place, Lord Francis Leveson Gower was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Vesey Fitzgerald President of the Board of Trade, with a seat in the Cabinet. Vesey Fitzgerald was M.P. for

county Clare: his acceptance of office entailed an appeal to his constituents. The Association, as we have just seen, had entered a resolution on their minutes to oppose the election of anyone who should support an administration not making emancipation a Cabinet question. The case was clear. But would the Association have the courage to put their resolution in execution? Fitzgerald — there was no blinking the fact — was a formidable opponent. The scion of an ancient and honourable family, the son of a man who, rather than vote for the Union, had resigned his office of Prime Sergeant, a gentleman of engaging manners, an orator of no common eloquence, a friend personally to the Catholics, it seemed little short of madness to think of opposing him. On the other hand, the Association had often been taunted with their paper resolutions; to decline the contest at this juncture was to incur disaster more irremediable than defeat. Before, however, coming to any decision, it was determined to send down two members of the Association, Messrs. Steele and O'Gorman Mahon, the former a Protestant, to sound the constituency. To their astonishment they found the electors not only willing but anxious to fight. The difficulty was to find a suitable candidate. The only possible one, Major Macnamara, a personal friend of Fitzgerald's, refused to allow himself to be put in nomination. In this dilemma, Steele suggested setting up some parish clerk or grave-digger, providing him with a qualification out of the Catholic Rent, and returning him in derision of the Wellington administration. Fortunately, no such

unheroic expedient was necessary. Why, it was suggested, should not O'Connell himself be persuaded to contest the constituency?

The suggestion was made one day by Sir David Roose, sometime High Sheriff of Dublin, to a very intimate friend of O'Connell's, P. V. Fitzpatrick, and the latter, recalling to mind how Keogh had once expressed an opinion that emancipation would never be conceded until a Catholic was returned to Parliament, at once hurried off to submit the proposal to O'Connell. Naturally O'Connell, who had never dreamed of entering Parliament, pooh-poohed the idea. He had no wish to sacrifice his profession—no funds for the occasion, etc.; but Fitzpatrick would take no refusal, and, giving currency to the report that O'Connell was going to stand, immediately set about raising the sinews of war. In ten days he had collected £28,000. His enthusiasm and energy forced a reluctant assent from O'Connell, and two days after, on 24th June, 1828, the latter issued his address to the electors of county Clare. The address, a somewhat rambling document, written *currente calamo* in the office of the *Evening Post*, to the proprietorship of which Frederick Conway had now succeeded John Magee, called on the electors of county Clare to choose between him and Vesey Fitzgerald—

"Choose between him who has so long cultivated his own interests and one who seeks only to advance yours; choose between the sworn libeller of the Catholic faith and one who has devoted his early life to your cause, who has consumed his manhood in a struggle for your liberties, and who has ever lived and is ready to die for

O'CONNELL, FITZPATRICK, AND CONWAY IN THE OFFICE OF THE "EVENING POST."

FROM THE PAINTING BY HAVERTY IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, DUBLIN.

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the integrity, the honour, the purity of the Catholic faith, and the promotion of Irish freedom and happiness."

They were not to be misled by the statement that he was not qualified to be elected. He was qualified to be elected and to represent them. It was true that, as a Catholic, he could not, and of course never would, take the oath prescribed to members of Parliament; but the authority which had created those oaths—the Parliament—could abrogate them, and he was confident that, if elected, the most bigoted of their enemies would see the necessity of removing from the chosen representative of the people an obstacle which would prevent him from doing his duty to his king and to his country. Should he be returned he pledged himself to vote for every measure favourable to radical reform "so that the House of Commons may truly, as our Catholic ancestors intended it should do, represent the people"; for the repeal of the Vestry Bill, the Subletting Act and the grand jury laws; for the diminution and more equal distribution of the overgrown wealth of the Established Church in Ireland, so that the surplus may be restored to the sustentation of the poor, the aged, and the infirm; for every measure of retrenchment and reduction of the national expenditure; and finally he pledged himself to bring the question of the repeal of the Union, at the earliest possible period, before the consideration of the Legislature.

The announcement of his determination to contest county Clare caused a tremendous sensation, not unmixed with a feeling of dread lest he was

imperilling the whole situation. "O'Connell," wrote the Lord Lieutenant, "finds himself so much opposed by some of the most respectable of the bishops, and by many of the lower clergy also, that he is quite wild." But the benediction of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin rested on him, and having that he was satisfied.

"It is," wrote Bishop Doyle, "when difficulties press on us that we should increase our exertions, and exhibit in our conduct that decision which is the harbinger of success. I am unable and unwilling to calculate the consequences which must result from your contest with Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, but I am satisfied these consequences will be as useful as they must be important if the lovers of civil and religious liberty in Clare do their duty to the sacred cause to which you have devoted anew your time, your talents, your fortune, and your life. Farewell, my dear friend, may the God of truth and justice protect and prosper you."

A day or two afterwards he set out for Ennis. A considerable crowd collected at the Four Courts to see him off, and all along the way he was greeted with signs of popular enthusiasm which could hardly have been more pronounced had he been returning victorious instead of going to fight what to many seemed a desperate battle. As he approached his destination, the obstruction grew so great, the stoppages so frequent, that it was not till two o'clock in the morning of the nomination day that he reached Ennis. The nominations over, the day at last dawned which was to witness the beginning of the contest

on which so many hopes depended. It was Monday, the 30th of June, when the election began. From an early hour in the morning the little town was alive with county voters, many of them accompanied by their wives and children, to the number, it was calculated, of thirty thousand. The rain was falling heavily, but the greatest good humour prevailed amongst them, as they quietly and orderly took possession, each parish by itself, of the booths assigned to them in the open streets or in the adjacent meadows. In apprehension of a riot, the Lord Lieutenant had massed troops in the neighbourhood. Three hundred policemen had been drafted into the town itself. But not a single soldier—not a single policeman—was required to preserve order, although the excitement was at fever pitch. It was an extraordinary spectacle. Each day at stated intervals milk, potatoes, and oatmeal were served out by the priests to their respective parishioners. Not a drop of spirituous liquor passed their lips the whole time. What a degree of moral restraint that in itself implied almost passes belief when one remembers how prone the Irish were to faction fights, and that the reputation of county Clare in that respect was second only to that of Tipperary. It was as if, conscious that the eyes of the whole nation were fixed upon them, they had registered a vow to do their duty manfully and unselfishly, and to show themselves worthy of the liberty for which they were fighting. Their victory was unsullied by a single breach of the peace, and it was a victory such as no one had dreamed of. O'Connell had done them the honour to solicit their suffrages:

they showed themselves worthy of the honour he had conferred on them. Men who had entered the town subservient to the will of their masters broke away from them when they reached the polling booth. The landlords were beside themselves with rage. One of them, Hickman by name, swore to O'Connell that if he canvassed a single one of his tenants he would shoot him dead. O'Connell replied by canvassing every one of them. That day the priest was mightier than the landlord. A word—a look—sufficed, and another vote was registered for O'Connell. Complaints were raised of sacerdotal tyranny; but those who complained forgot that if it was a tyranny it was one of the peasants' own choosing. The fact was, the election wore the aspect of a religious ceremony. The Covenanter standing up against Claverhouse's dragoons at Bothwell Brig commands our wonder: is the half-starved peasant defying his landlord at Ennis less worthy of admiration? To both the object was the same—religious and civil freedom. The minister of the Kirk, the priest of the Church, both were redolent of the soil; peasants for the most part, both of them. During the election a forty-shilling freeholder faltered in the path of duty and voted for Fitzgerald. A priest announced the fact to his audience, and a cry of anger burst from their lips. "Silence!" exclaimed the priest; "kneel down and pray for his soul. The man died last night." Under similar circumstances, might not words of similar import have been spoken by a follower of John Knox—by a Peden or a Cameron?

As at Waterford, the first day's polling practically

decided the contest; by the end of the second day the only question was how great O'Connell's majority would be. On Saturday Fitzgerald withdrew from the struggle. He had polled all the gentry and all the £50 freeholders; but the majority against him was 1075, more than two to one. Announcing his defeat to Peel he wrote, "The election, thank God, is over, and I do feel happy in its being terminated, notwithstanding its result. . . . All the great interests broke down, and the desertion has been universal. Such a scene as we have had! Such a tremendous prospect as it opens to us!" The Sheriff, leaving the House of Commons to decide the knotty point whether as a Catholic O'Connell could take his seat, announced that he had been duly elected M.P. for the county of Clare. The battle had been fought and won — not by the individual efforts of one man, but by the united exertions of the forty-shilling freeholders. But for this result one man alone was responsible. That O'Connell was a duly elected member of Parliament was the fruit of his long years of patient toil and unselfish devotion to the Catholic cause. It was the symbol of the revolution which he had by his own unaided exertions brought to pass in Ireland. The joy of the Catholics was unbounded. They insisted on chairing him through Ennis, and when he left the town they escorted him, each with a green bough in his hand, to the confines of the county. The enthusiasm communicated itself to the soldiery, and unmindful of military decorum they cheered the procession as it defiled before them, one young sergeant

in his ardour even quitting the ranks to grasp the Liberator's hand for a moment. As the processionists approached Limerick, and while they were still five miles from the city, they were met by an immense concourse of men, women, and children. It seemed as if the entire city had come out to welcome the victor, and as they passed the stone on which the broken treaty of Limerick had been signed the cheers of fifty thousand voices rent the air in jubilation for the first Catholic returned to Parliament since its violation. All the way to Dublin he was greeted with similar manifestations of rejoicing, and, though he travelled principally by night, he found the inhabitants of each town assembled before their chapels to greet his arrival with bonfires and other demonstrations of public joy.

One of his first acts after his election had been to use his privilege as M.P. to frank letters, and it was through them that people in Dublin were first made acquainted with his success. But would he be allowed to take his seat? That was the question on everybody's lips. During the election he had made the astounding discovery that there was nothing to prevent a Catholic sitting in Parliament. The announcement of his discovery staggered everybody. What, it was asked, had all the bother about emancipation been if no restrictions ever existed? The fact was O'Connell *had* actually hit on an ambiguity in the Act of Union; but the common-sense construction of the words left little hope of his being able to prove his contention. Still the ambiguity existed, and caused no little consternation among

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the constitutional authorities in England. Croker and others talked nonsense about compelling O'Connell to take his seat, and then, upon his declining to take the oaths, to declare his seat void and issue a new writ. But O'Connell was anxious to see what effect his election would have on the general question before imperilling his position, and the session came to an end without any attempt on his part to claim his seat.

His election had given a great impetus to the movement. The week following it the contributions to the Rent amounted to £2704, and preparations were made for extending the experiment begun in Clare to other Catholic constituencies. In Munster, Connaught, and Leinster, the organisation of the Catholic Association was fairly perfect; but it had practically made no progress in Ulster. The province which had headed the volunteer movement, which had given birth to the United Irish Society, which in the days of Wolfe Tone had been the backbone of nationalism, was now not only apathetic in the cause, but strongly opposed to the concession of the Catholic claims. Men spoke of the "Black North," and wondered at the incomprehensible change that had taken place. But there was nothing really very incomprehensible in it. A careful perusal of Wolfe Tone's *Memoirs* will help to throw considerable light on the subject. But if one would thoroughly understand the position of Ulster in Irish politics in the nineteenth century one must go back to the days of the plantation under James I. This is hardly the place for a full discussion of the

subject, but a few remarks may help to throw some light on a problem that baffled O'Connell's efforts to solve. Ulster, with the possible exception of county Monaghan, is essentially a Scottish settlement — in customs, language, religion, and national feeling. The lines of its history follow on those of Scotland rather than on those of England. Instead of becoming assimilated to the bulk of the population as the English in Leinster and Munster, the Scottish settlers in Ulster, and their descendants, have always maintained their native individuality. The fact was recognisable in the seventeenth century: it is recognisable at the present moment. It was a stumbling-block to Strafford, to Cromwell, to O'Connell,— to English Churchman, English Nonconformist, and Irish Catholic alike,— to the three greatest men Ireland has ever known.

To speak of Ulster as the "Black North," if by "black" is meant unenlightened, is a misuse of words. Scotland — meaning always the Lowlands — since its great awakening in the sixteenth century cannot be called an unenlightened nation. Stubborn, pertinacious in sticking to its view of the truth, illiberal in the application of its principles, it may be; but in steadfastness, honesty, and intellectual acquirements it holds a first place among nations. Having settled its destiny by one great national effort, it has since steadily pursued the even tenor of its way. Its people, apart from its metaphysicians, are a canny, douce sort of folk, unfond of experiments touching the ordinary conditions of life. In England two and two has sometimes meant five: in Scotland

never. Hence, while England, with a chequered career, has always led the van of political and social progress, Scotland has kept quietly by her old ways until convinced that change meant progress and not retrogression. What Scotland has been to England, Ulster has in a measure been to the rest of Ireland. Even the execrable government of her Westmorelands, her Camdens, and her Clares could hardly disturb her equanimity. A few adventurous souls rushed into the conflict; but Ulster herself was glad when the Union put an end to the turmoil, and let her get on with her work. Unimaginative, industrious, liberal within certain limits, and self-reliant, all she asked for was to be let alone. True, she had her own grievances, but these would right themselves in time. Meanwhile Ulster was n't Turkey. People could grow rich, stick by their old faiths, and die quietly like rational creatures. She was a little bit of Scotland and felt herself more Scotch than Irish. For her, Connaught and Munster were as much foreign as England was. Had emancipation been conceded when the Act of Union was carried all would have been well. Even the Orange Society, that monstrous engine of oppression, was in its first inception a means of protection rather than a weapon of aggression. The mischief was that Government mixed itself in the business, and, using it for its own purposes, gave it an influence and a significance which by itself it would never have possessed.

Naturally, therefore, when the Association announced its determination to extend its propaganda within the sacred limits of the northern province the

announcement caused no little ferment amongst Ulstermen. And it was, accordingly, in no very good humour that the good citizens of Derry collected, early in August, to listen to a political address from their representative in Parliament, Colonel Dawson. George Dawson, or "Derry Dawson," as he was better known, was Peel's brother-in-law. He held a subordinate office in the Wellington ministry and hitherto had been counted a staunch opponent of Catholic emancipation. But he was a man of candid mind and, as we have seen, had openly admitted to O'Connell that his examination before the Committee of the House of Commons had removed many of his prejudices. In the interval he had given much thought to the subject, and after the Clare election he had come to the conclusion that further resistance to the demands of the Catholics was not only useless but senseless. Having the courage of his opinions, he had called his constituents together to listen to his views on the subject. It was a stormy meeting. After listening incredulously to him a little time, his audience no sooner realised his meaning than groans and hisses interrupted his further progress. When he stated that, in the opinion of some, rebellion was the upshot of the Association, the meeting cheered him to the echo: when he proceeded to announce that such was not his belief, his words were drowned in a storm of hisses. Matters improved somewhat towards the end, when he uttered a serious warning to the Association that Ulstermen would resist even to bloodshed any invasion of the province. But the general

impression left by his speech was that Administration was preparing to capitulate to the Catholics.

His warning was despised, and a few days afterwards John Lawless, commissioned by the Association, prepared to invade Ulster. It was a hazardous experiment and the instrument chosen was about as incompetent for the delicate task entrusted to him as could well have been found. Rash and headstrong, the chances were ten to one that if he persisted in his attempt he would cause serious trouble in the north. Nevertheless O'Connell had convinced himself that the experiment was one worth making. For himself he did not believe that there was anything but bluster in Dawson's threat. "The mission of Mr. Lawless," he wrote to the Secretary of the Association in a letter intended for the public,

"is, in my opinion, one of the greatest importance, and the entire country anxiously expects the details of his progress. . . . I am at present more anxious about him, because of a ludicrous threat which appears to have been thrown out against him at the Derry Dinner. . . . Mr. Lawless will, I am sure, proceed, holding such threats in thorough contempt—he will actually organise the collection of the Catholic Rent in as many parishes as possible; he will reconcile parties; abolish secret societies and illegal oaths from amongst the People; soothe and allay the irritation caused by illegal orgies of the Orangemen; and in short, whilst he promotes constitutional and strictly legal exertions for national freedom, he will, I trust, restore to the North that tranquillity and peace which now so gloriously distinguishes the other three Provinces of Ireland."

But as Lawless neared the confines of Ulster, the difficulties and dangers of the mission he had undertaken began to strike him more forcibly. He had, however, announced his intention of entering the "Black North," at Ballybay, on the borders of county Monaghan, and he kept his word. On the day appointed, and accompanied, it was said, by 140,000 peasants, some of them with arms concealed under their coats, he set out for Ballybay; but as he approached the town, he found the heights above it occupied by from two to three thousand resolute Orangemen determined to bar his progress. The responsibility was too much for him, and despite the encouraging shouts of his followers he ignominiously but wisely beat a hasty retreat. What the consequences might have been had he persisted it is, says the historian of the Association, not difficult to conjecture. "Ballybay might have been entered, but a rebellion that night would have commenced in Ireland."

The fact is, that at no time since the Union was the state of affairs more critical than it was in the month of August, 1828. So unaccustomed indeed, was the mass of the people to the idea of constitutional agitation that, notwithstanding all O'Connell's preaching, they confidently expected it was only a step to a national rising. Especially was this the case among the peasants of Tipperary. Unfortunately, too, O'Connell's utterances at this time lent considerable sanction to this perverted view of the situation. About the very time that Lawless invaded Ulster, a great provincial meeting was held

at Clonmel. Alluding to a threat of armed resistance against the Association on the part of certain leading Orangemen he had exclaimed:

"Would to God that our excellent viceroy, Lord Anglesey, would only give me a commission, and if those men of blood should attempt to attack the property and persons of his Majesty's loyal subjects, with a hundred thousand of my brave Tipperary boys I would soon drive them into the sea before me."

The words were a mere rhetorical device delivered in the heat of the moment; but to his audience they conveyed a very different and much more sinister meaning. After the meeting the question was frequently heard, "When will he call us out?" The answer as often as not was a finger on the lip, and a significant smile and wink. Many of the peasants, too, had arms concealed near their cottages in bogs and recesses in the mountains. Believing that they had the encouragement of their leaders and that Government was actually on their side, it was not long before they proceeded from words to deeds. Meetings multiplied and there was much marching to and fro with banners. An insult offered to a priest by a policeman during one of their processions was avenged in the most approved style. Within a few hours afterwards the barracks went up in flames. Consternation seized the local authorities, and application was at once made to the Association to interfere in the interests of peace.

O'Connell, little dreaming of the mischief his words had caused, had gone to Darrynane; but

Sheil was in Dublin and he acted with commendable promptitude. On 25th September he addressed the Association on the subject. The Government, by allowing the Catholic question to convulse the country and by not interposing for its adjustment, had, he averred, caused the mind of Ireland to be infuriated to such a point that any unfortunate contingency might throw the country into a convulsion. The oldest man who heard him did not remember the time when national passion ran so high. For himself, he was at a loss to see any benefit to be derived from the meetings and marchings to which so much anxious attention had been lately directed, beyond the evidence which they afforded of the colossal power of the people; and of that amazing strength he thought that there had been perhaps proof enough given. It was excellent to have a giant's strength, but it was rash to use it after that gigantic fashion. Let them rather show the Marquis of Anglesey that Ireland could be governed upon different principles; let them show him what a wise government could be, by performing the part of a wise government themselves, and prove with what facility Irishmen could be controlled.

Before the meeting separated resolutions were passed dissuading the people from holding tumultuous assemblies and inviting O'Connell "to employ his powerful and deserved authority" to the same end. O'Connell's address appeared on 30th September. Next day a Government proclamation forbidding such assemblages was published. It was

hardly needed. The peasantry had yielded instant obedience to the order of the Association backed by the authority of O'Connell, and all danger of an insurrection was practically over. For this result the wise forbearance of the Marquis of Anglesey's Government was largely responsible. Already, in April, he had given it as his opinion that the only way to restore peace was "by taking Messrs. O'Connell and Sheil from the Association and placing them in the House of Commons." He had viewed with sympathy, if he did not actually suggest, the idea of O'Connell contesting County Clare, and during the autumn he had anxiously expected some sign of concession on the part of Administration, which never came. Even when the situation grew critical he had acted with the utmost moderation, relying, and not without reason, on the good sense of the Association. His letters, while they faithfully depicted the danger of procrastination, were studiously calm, and gave no sanction to measures of a repressive character.

"It seems," he wrote on 8th September, "agreed that the public feeling was never at so high a pitch of excitement as at the present time. The language of both parties is violent in the extreme, and both appear ripe for action. The organisation of the Catholics is very complete. . . . The speakers continue to be inflammatory. Expressions might possibly be noted that would admit of prosecution; but in general the language is nicely measured, and so equivocal as to admit of an explanation that might be strained into an excess of loyalty and a nervous warning to the State of the danger to which it is exposed.

. . . The Brunswickers are rivalling the Association in violence and in Rent. Two Associations and two Rents are rather formidable. The Brunswick establishment is not very flattering to the king or his ministers, or to the army — since it deems it necessary to take the whole under its especial protection. This is a most distressing state of things, and I defy anyone to pronounce upon the result; but this I know, that things must not remain long as they are. I cannot see far before me. I can only guess at what is likely to happen for a few months. I calculate upon a quiet winter in acts; but not in language. I ground my opinion upon this—the Catholics are persuaded the Brunswickers will bring on a collision if they can, with the view of committing the Government against them. This is what the leaders will endeavour to avoid, and with the power they possess over the minds of the multitude possibly they may succeed; and then there will be probably even less crime and nightly outrage than has been usual. Even if there be any project of insurrection, which I do not believe, the winter would not be the chosen season. I can imagine nothing less inviting than a rebel bivouac during a long, dreary winter's night. Therefore it appears to me probable that you will have time to legislate before we begin to fight."

Instead of legislation, or an intimation that legislation was intended, came troops. "I must say," he wrote to the Duke of Wellington on 6th November, not without a touch of sarcasm, "you certainly do not do things by halves. Why, you have placed at my disposal troops enough to control the Brunswickers and the Association, even if they should coalesce and combine to make war upon me." But

in fact the situation was by no means so simple as Anglesey imagined it to be. Himself a plain, straightforward soldier, and no politician, he could see only one solution to the difficulty—emancipation. No doubt he was right. But for Wellington and Peel there were other considerations to be taken into account. Not only had they to overcome their own reluctance to a step which they had hitherto consistently opposed; but there was the King to be considered, and his scruples were as strong as ever. Consequently, Anglesey's advocacy of concession served rather to irritate than to conciliate them. The King indeed was so angry at what he regarded as a piece of treachery that in August he urged Wellington to recall him. But the latter, fearing that such a step would aggravate the situation, declined to countenance the suggestion. So matters went on till November, each day bringing some fresh ground of friction between ministers and the Irish government. In vain did Wellington try to make up his mind as to the proper course to pursue. On 16th November he suggested to the King the desirability of yielding. The danger of delay he insisted was very great. But the King was obstinate. The Prime Minister was at his wits' end. He could see no prospect of an immediate settlement, so he wrote in answer to a letter from his old acquaintance, Dr. Curtis, the Catholic Archbisop of Armagh, unless the question was buried for a time and the interval employed in diligently considering the difficulties besetting the question. Archbishop Curtis transmitted his letter to the Lord Lieutenant, and

in acknowledging it Anglesey admitted that he had the misfortune to differ in his opinion from the Duke. He saw no possibility of burying the question, nor advantage likely to follow from the attempt. On the contrary, he advised the Catholics not to lose sight of the measure for one moment, but to press it forward by every constitutional means in their power. The question was one for the Legislature to decide, and his greatest anxiety was that it should be met by the Parliament under the most favourable circumstances, and that the opposers of Catholic emancipation should be disarmed by the patient forbearance, as well as by the unwearied perseverance, of its advocates.

The publication of Wellington's letter and Anglesey's reply brought matters to a crisis. A week afterwards the latter was recalled. When the fact became known, addresses of sympathy flowed in upon him from all sides. Never since the recall of Earl Fitzwilliam had Ireland been so profoundly moved as on the day when he bade farewell to them. With a modesty and self-restraint that became him well, and added dignity to his withdrawal, he refrained from making any parade of the chagrin he doubtless felt, and from increasing the difficulties of Administration by countenancing any public demonstration in his favour. But the people were not to be denied the melancholy pleasure of testifying to the grief they felt at his departure, and when Anglesey quitted Dublin the road, all the way to Kingstown, where he was to embark, was lined with citizens whose sad demeanour bore witness to the

sorrow with which they parted from him. Here and there, one saw flags with sentences from his now famous letter inscribed on them, and as he rode silently and bareheaded through their midst men's thoughts instinctively turned to Fitzwilliam. Would the same results follow from Anglesey's recall? Would the agitation be once more stamped out in blood? So at least the Orangemen construed the action of the Government. Their satisfaction knew no bounds, and they openly proclaimed that secret alliance between the Crown and themselves of which they had hitherto boasted in private. Their view of the situation was shared by the Catholics. But whatever their fears, their actions displayed no timidity. They remembered Anglesey's parting advice to them, and determined at all hazards not to lose sight of emancipation for one moment.

That the King would have felt no hesitation in throwing the sword into the balance, and by every means in his power supporting the Orangemen and Brunswickers, even at the risk of a civil war, is extremely probable. But neither Wellington nor Peel was prepared to go to these extreme lengths. The time, they felt, had come when emancipation in some shape or form must be conceded. The danger of procrastination was too great to be encountered. Moreover, it was doubtful if the army, in which so many Catholics were incorporated, would stand the strain which the policy advocated by the King would place upon it. "There are," said a soldier in the 21st Fusileers, a nominally Scottish regiment, "two ways of firing—*at* a man and *over* a man; and if we were

called out against O'Connell and our country, I think we should know the difference." In fact, Anglesey's recall, as events proved, instead of being a sign that Administration was resolved to stick to its guns, was the first step towards capitulation. But the secret was so well kept that it was not till the very eve of the meeting of Parliament, on 6th February, 1829, that any token of their intention was given.

The day before, O'Connell, who was preparing to leave for London, addressed the Association for the last time. Alluding to the rumour which had reached him, he moved that on the day emancipation received the royal assent the Association should be dissolved.

"But," he added significantly, "nothing less than unconditional emancipation will satisfy us: and although we would not refuse an instalment of seven shillings and sixpence given us unconditionally, we should not lose sight of the remainder of the debt. . . . Until religious liberty is established in Ireland the labours of the Association shall continue; the moment there shall be a repeal of oppressive laws on account of religion, the Association shall be extinguished, and Catholics shall mingle indiscriminately with the rest of their fellow-citizens. But the attention to national interests . . . which has been generated by an all-absorbing and lengthened controversy, shall still survive; and although by the abolition of distinctions, on account of religion, Catholics shall no more be heard of as separate political advocates, that spirit has grown up amongst the people which shall inspire them to new and glorious efforts of

patriotism, until Ireland shall become what God and nature intended her to be."

Next day he left Dublin, and arriving in London on the 16th, accompanied by Messrs. O'Gorman, Bellew, O'Gorman Mahon, and Steele, took up his quarters at Bett's Hotel in Dover Street. The journey had not been without some personal danger to himself. Anti-popery feeling ran very strong in the counties through which he had to travel; at Shrewsbury his carriage broke down, and in the chief towns, particularly in Coventry, he was greeted with menacing shouts of "No Popery!" and "Down with O'Connell!" The Speech from the Throne had answered the expectations created by the rumour of the intentions of Government. The Association was to be suppressed; but its suppression was to be followed by a measure of Catholic relief. The Bill for the suppression of the Association was introduced by Peel on the very day O'Connell arrived in London. Being limited in its operation to twelve months it encountered little opposition in Parliament even from the friends of the Catholics, by whom it was regarded as a necessary preliminary to the measure of pacification intended to be immediately brought forward by Government; and on 5th March it received the royal assent. By that time the Association had ceased to exist. Its dissolution, however, had not been accomplished without some little friction among the leaders of the Catholics. O'Connell, who had made emancipation, actual and real, a *sine qua non*, had written from Shrewsbury opposing that step.

"Ireland," he declared, "had never yet confided but she had been betrayed." His view was opposed by Sheil and Lawless, and after a fierce debate the Association agreed on 12th February to dissolve. Its last act was to place on record "that we are indebted to Daniel O'Connell, beyond all other men, for its original creation and sustainment; that he is entitled for the achievement of its freedom to the everlasting gratitude of Ireland." But it was with a feeling of almost parental sadness that O'Connell witnessed a period put to its labours. "How mistaken men are," he wrote, "who suppose that the history of the world will be over as soon as we are emancipated! Oh! *that* will be the time to *commence* the struggle for popular rights."

Meanwhile he still delayed to present himself for admission into the House of Commons. Petitions had been lodged against his return on the ground of undue clerical influence, and he was moreover anxious to see what form the Bill for Emancipation would take before staking his chance on the interpretation he placed on the Act of Union. On 6th March the committee selected to try the merits of the petitions against him unanimously decided in his favour. The previous day Peel submitted the Government scheme for the removal of the disabilities attaching to Roman Catholics to the House of Commons. In itself it commanded O'Connell's entire approval. It was "frank, direct, complete," containing no reference to a veto or other securities. "I always said," he wrote to Sugrue, "that when they came to emancipate they would not care a bulrush about those vetoistical

arrangements, which so many paltry Catholics from time to time pressed on me as useful to emancipation." Unfortunately the Emancipation Bill did not stand alone. It was accompanied by two supplementary measures—the one to prevent the extension of monastic institutions; the other for the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders. In regard to the former O'Connell staked his reputation to "run a coach-and-six three times told" through it, and as a matter of fact it was never executed: as to the latter, he determined to offer every possible resistance in his power to it. The day following, 7th March, addressing a meeting of Catholics in the Thatched House Tavern he strongly protested against any attempt to interfere with the elective franchise. The Catholics, he insisted, were bound by every tie of gratitude to stand by and protect the forty-shilling freeholders, and at his suggestion a resolution was passed calling on the Whigs to oppose the freehold wing at all hazards. But every effort to prevent their disfranchisement failed. It was, said Brougham, the price—the almost extravagant price—of the inestimable good which would result from the Relief Bill. On 30th March the Emancipation Bill passed the Commons by a majority of 178; it was read for a third time in the House of Lords on 10th April, and on the 13th the royal assent was given by commission to it and the Freeholds' (Ireland) Regulation Bill.

The victory had been won. After twenty-nine years of stubborn, obstinate resistance, England had consented to redeem Pitt's pledge, and to pay the price stipulated for the Union. That emancipation

might have been as easily conceded in 1800 as it was in 1829 hardly anyone will now venture to gainsay. But, had it been conceded in 1800, its concession would have altered the whole subsequent course of Irish history. Then it would have come as a boon — as a token that England was both able and willing to measure out equal justice to every class and sect in Ireland. It would have conciliated national feeling and have atoned for the loss of the national legislature. Coming, however, as it did, not as a free gift, but as the price paid to prevent a civil war, it failed to kindle the smallest spark of national gratitude. Twist the matter as one may, it is clear that England's necessity, and not England's justice, was responsible for the concession. Her statesmen had boasted that they would yield to no compulsion, and yet two of her strongest ministers — Wellington and Peel—had so yielded, and that without any further reasons being adduced than had been brought forward a quarter of a century before. It is useless to conceal the fact. Emancipation was a victory. The battle had lasted twenty-nine years, and Ireland had conquered. That she had conquered, she owed to the exertions of one man—to O'Connell. Without the stimulus afforded by his agitation, the necessity of yielding on the part of England would never have arisen. That emancipation must sooner or later have been conceded, those who believe in a divine purpose working through the affairs of men will find it hard to combat. But that it would have come when it did, and without trammels of one sort or another, is, humanly speaking, highly improbable.

STATUE OF O'CONNELL, CITY HALL, DUBLIN.

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Naturally, to those who had taken an active part in the struggle, the Act of Emancipation seemed to possess an importance which intrinsically did not belong to it. In itself its value proved infinitesimal. Nevertheless, O'Connell, writing to Sugrue on 14th April—"the first day of Freedom," as he headed his letter—did not exaggerate when he called it "one of the greatest triumphs recorded in history — a bloodless revolution more extensive in its operation than any other political change that could take place." It was all that, and the price paid for it — the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders — was not too great for the benefits that flowed from it. To see, however, in the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders the chief significance of the Act of Emancipation is far too limited a view to take of the subject. Ireland in 1800 was a lifeless log; in 1829 it was a living, sensitive organism. The agitation for emancipation had wrought the change. In 1793 the Irish Parliament had conceded the elective franchise to the Roman Catholics, at the same time denying to them the right to sit in Parliament. It was, as Grattan then and there pointed out, an egregious blunder—a ὕστερον πρότερον in politics, and a premium placed on poverty and corruption. From that date till 1826 the forty-shilling freeholders were a drag on national progress. O'Connell's view in that respect was perfectly sound. Then came the unexpected awakening, and the revolt of the forty-shilling freeholders. The blunder that had been committed in 1793 was then transparent. It was then evident that to concede emancipation, *i. e.*, to

allow to Catholics the right to sit in Parliament without raising the electoral franchise, was to sanction a revolution in Ireland the consequences of which could not be foreseen. For of the ability of O'Connell to carry the majority of seats at the next ensuing general election there could not be the slightest question; in which case 1829 would have anticipated 1886. The fact was, the forty-shilling freeholders were an anomaly in the constitution, and so long as the franchise in England continued to be restricted, their disfranchisement was no injustice to Ireland. Even O'Connell, while regretting the fact in itself, was obliged to confess that the freehold wing was as little objectionable in its details as such a Bill could possibly be. It made the right of voting clear and distinct; its only evil was of course the increase of the qualification. In a word, emancipation coupled with disfranchisement simply repaired the blunder committed in 1793. But in the meantime a new order of things had come into existence, and for that new order of things the agitation for emancipation was responsible. "It is a good beginning," wrote O'Connell; "and now, if I can get Catholics and Protestants to join, something solid and substantial may be done for all." It was a beginning—a beginning of every concession since made to Ireland. Herein lay its significance.

In Ireland the news of the victory caused a profound impression. But every precaution had been taken by the Catholics to prevent any outburst of popular feeling which might be construed into an insult to the Protestants. The predominant desire

on the part of the former was for reconciliation, and, as Peel confessed, the first results of emancipation were a far greater calm in Ireland than he had ever known to exist there. But if in this respect the Catholics yielded a ready obedience to the instructions of their leaders, they were not to be debarred from showing their gratitude to the author of their newly recovered liberties. A subscription for a national testimonial to O'Connell was set on foot. The idea, following the precedent set by the Irish Parliament in the case of Grattan, was to purchase him an estate; but when it was afterwards found that he intended to abandon his professional career, and to devote himself entirely to advocating the cause of Ireland in Parliament, the plan developed into that of an annual tribute which seldom fell below £16,000, and occasionally attained much more handsome dimensions. The manager and treasurer of the fund was his old friend, P. V. Fitzpatrick; and to his business-like capacity and unflagging devotion O'Connell was infinitely indebted for the regular supply of those sinews of war without which his agitation would have been deprived of its chief weight.

Meanwhile, he had been trying by every means within his power to smooth the way for his admission into Parliament. On 9th May, he addressed a long letter to every individual member of the House of Commons, pleading his right to take his seat, first, on the ground of the Relief Act, and, secondly, because no Act positively prohibiting Roman Catholics sitting in Parliament had been passed since the

Union. He was assured that Government did not mean to make a question of it, and he was hopeful of success, his only doubt arising from the line of conduct which the Speaker, Manners Sutton, the nephew of his old enemy, Lord Manners, might pursue. On Friday, 15th May, Sir Francis Burdett moved that he might be admitted to his seat on taking the oath provided by the Emancipation Act. At Peel's request the debate was adjourned to the following Monday. On that day, O'Connell was heard at the bar in support of the claim. His speech was calm and temperate, his manner that of a polished gentleman, and his argument, if not convincing, won at least the praise of some of the ablest lawyers in the House.

"Brougham," he wrote with justifiable pride to his cousin, Charles Sugrue, "told me to-day that there was but one opinion on the subject of my speech, and that is, that my success in a Parliamentary career is quite certain. Lord Lansdowne conveyed to me, through Tom Moore, his opinion that from report he had conceived that, however suited to a popular assembly, or mob, my eloquence would not answer for the *refinement* of Parliament, but that he was now decidedly convinced of the contrary. The Marquis of Anglesey came to see me twice with a still more flattering judgment."

After listening to him, however, the House decided by 190 to 116 that, having been elected before the passing of the Relief Act, he could not be allowed to sit unless he took the oath obligatory on all members at the time, and a motion was carried that he should attend the next evening and the clerk

should tender him that oath at the table of the House.

"I was present," writes Rickard O'Connell, "and anyone who witnessed the scene can never forget it. The excitement was intense; breathless silence prevailed in that crowded assembly when he was introduced by Sir F. Burdett and Lord Duncannon. The Speaker then informed him of the resolution of the House on the previous night — that he could not take his seat unless he took the oath prescribed at the time he was elected. The Liberator then said, "May I ask to see the oath?" The clerk was directed to hand him the oath, which was printed on a large card. O'Connell put on his spectacles and perused the oath with deepest attention. One would suppose he had never seen the oath before; during the few minutes he was so perusing it the smallest pin could be heard drop. He then said, 'I see in the oath one assertion as to a matter of fact which I *know* to be false. I see in it another assertion as to a matter of opinion which I *believe* to be untrue. I therefore refuse to take that oath,' and with an expression of the most profound contempt, he flung the card from him on the table of the House. The House was literally '*struck of a heap.*' No other phrase that I know of but that quaint old-fashioned one can accurately describe the feeling of amazement that pervaded Parliament for some minutes after the card was thus contemptuously flung on the table. The Speaker then said: 'The hon. and learned gentleman, having refused to take the oath, will please retire below the bar,' and the Liberator, again leaning on Burdett and Duncannon, came below the bar and sat near me under the gallery. In the debate that ensued, the speakers on all sides paid him the highest compliments,

but it ended in the issuing of a new writ for Clare. The words I give are the *ipsissima verba* — the precise syllables used by him on that memorable occasion — and I never saw them accurately given yet in any account of the transaction."

The conduct of the House of Commons in rejecting O'Connell was no doubt logical enough, but it was lacking in generosity, and bore the appearance of a petty, vindictive act against a single individual, which, as it involved no principle whatever, robbed emancipation of the little bit of grace that clung to it, and demonstrated with what reluctance the concession had been made.

A day or two after his rejection, O'Connell issued his second address to the electors of county Clare: "the Address of the Hundred Promises," as it was ironically styled from the frequent repetition of the phrase "Send me to Parliament, and I will. . . ." After reminding them that it was mainly to their exertions that Ireland owed the restoration of her religious liberties, he called on them to complete their work, and, by again returning him, to assist in securing the political freedom of their beloved island. For himself, he had little doubt of the result of the appeal. Some time would inevitably elapse before the election could take place, owing to the necessity of reconstructing a fresh registry on the basis of the new £10 franchise. But nothing could be left to chance, and it was desirable that he should begin his canvass as soon as possible. Accordingly, he returned to Dublin on 2nd June. His arrival was the signal for another great ovation. This time he had really

returned as the Liberator. Once more, thanks to him, the Catholics were in possession of those rights of which they had for nearly a century and a half been deprived. Their joy and gratitude were unbounded. All the way from the landing-place to Merrion Square, the streets were thronged with people trying by shouting themselves hoarse to show how sincere their welcome of him was. And, tired though he was, it was only after he had gratified them with a few words from the balcony of his house, that they at last consented to retire and leave him to the privacy of his family.

Next day he addressed a large gathering in Clarendon Street chapel. After alluding to the events which had recently taken place — the passing of the Emancipation Act and his own rejection — he proceeded to discuss their plans for the future. History, he said, some people believed had come to a full stop because emancipation had been achieved. The world was like a clock run down. But they were there to wind it up again, and start a fresh agitation. Emancipation was only a step to Repeal. They were that day assembled, not as Catholics but as Irishmen, and the object of their meeting was the repeal of the Union and the recovery of their rights as a nation. Before the meeting separated it voted him the £5000 remaining in the hands of the Association at the time of its dissolution, to assist in defraying his election expenses. Two or three days afterwards, he set out for Ennis. His journey all the way resembled a triumphal progress. Every town through which he passed—Naas, Kildare, Monasterevan, Maryborough,

Mountrath, Roscrea—was decked in green. At Nenagh, which he reached at nightfall, candles were shining in every window. At Limerick, while he snatched a few hours' sleep, a large tree — roots and all—was planted before his hotel, and when he appeared at the door he was greeted with strains of national music from a band adroitly concealed amongst its branches. When he left the city, an immense crowd escorted him on the way to Ennis, where, at some distance from the town, a triumphal car was waiting for him, on which, "like Alexander entering Babylon," as an admiring reporter had it, he accomplished the remainder of his journey. Six weeks elapsed before the election took place. But banquets, public breakfasts, political meetings, the necessity of canvassing locally every part of the county, a flying visit to Dublin, another to Lifford, and a duel between Tom Steele and Smith O'Brien, helped the time over. Every effort was made by the Brunswickers to spin out the registry as long as possible, and up to the very last moment it was expected that they meant to run an opposition candidate. But at last the nomination day, the 30th July, arrived, and O'Connell was returned unopposed.

During the election he had announced his intention of devoting himself wholly to a parliamentary career, and the first use he made of his new-found liberty was to retire for a well-won holiday to Darrynane. One can imagine what happy days he spent there, following his beagles afoot in the dewy freshness of those early autumn mornings, his enjoyment rendered all the more intense by reason of the victory

he had won for his native land ; and the pleasant evenings that closed the day, in the society of his family and seldom failing guests, whom his hospitable board and generous companionship attracted thither. How the old rafters must have rung with merry peals of laughter from young and old as, in that rich Kerry brogue of his, he poured out anecdote on anecdote in endless profusion! Happy days, indeed! But if O'Connell had ever imagined that emancipation would put an end to religious dissension in Ireland, he was speedily disabused of the idea. True, the concession had been made that henceforth Catholic and Protestant were on an equality before the law. But the Act which, in the quaint language of an Irishman, had left Parliament "as straight as a poker," soon, in the hands of the Irish executive, became "as twisted as a corkscrew."

"You are aware," wrote O'Connell to the Knight of Kerry on 24th September, "that the decided countenance given to the Orange faction prevents emancipation from coming into play. There is more of unjust and unnatural virulence towards the Catholics in the present administration than existed even before the passing of the Emancipation Bill. Before that event, the Irish government was shamed by a sense of decency which is required from public hostility. The Relief Bill has just enabled them to act with distrust—immediate and personal rancour on the one hand, and with open and unblushing favouritism on the other."

The fact was that the ministry, having by the concession of emancipation thoroughly shaken the confidence of their own party, were anxious, by

displaying a firm front, to show that it was, after all, a mere strategic movement devoid of any serious significance, and by strong asseverations of "thus far and no further," to deprive the Emancipation Act, as O'Connell complained, of its natural effect. The Irish government, under the Duke of Northumberland and Lord Leveson Gower, backed up their efforts, and it was not surprising that, with the encouragement thus given to them, the Orangemen went a step farther than was intended, and, believing that the Catholics had been handed over to their mercy, began to inflict personal vengeance on them for the defeat they had recently suffered. Not only was O'Connell denied admission to the inner Bar — a matter of small moment in itself, but significant of the general treatment to which the Catholics were subjected — but as the summer wore to a close signs of stormy weather became more and more visible. Deprived of the moral support of the Association the Catholic peasantry fell back on their old, time-dishonoured plans of secret combination. Once more Orangeman and Ribbonman confronted each other — once more agrarian outrage stalked the land. It was the old, old story over again — non-payment of rent, followed by ejectment and intimidation. For the historian, another lost opportunity on the part of England to conciliate Ireland to be recorded.

In Tipperary the situation grew so serious that the magistrates applied to government for military protection. The disorder spread into the neighbouring county of Cork, where a plot to murder certain landlords, known as the Doneraile conspiracy, was

discovered or concocted. A number of persons implicated in it were arrested, and in October a special commission, presided over by Baron Pennefather and Justice Torrens, was sent down to Cork to try them. The prosecution was conducted by the Solicitor-General, John Doherty, of whose zeal to procure a conviction there was not the slightest doubt. The trial was on the point of beginning when a messenger, William Burke, of Ballyhea,—his name deserves to be remembered,—sent post-haste to implore O'Connell's assistance on behalf of the accused, galloped up to Darrynane. "Would the Liberator come? If he would, not a moment was to be lost. It was Sunday: next morning the trial would begin and between them Pennefather and Doherty would hang the lot." It was impossible to resist his appeal, and, jotting down a few words on paper to the effect that he would be in Cork next day, O'Connell made instant preparations for his departure. Giving himself hardly time to bait his horse, William Burke, bearing the glad tidings that the Liberator would come, set out on his return journey. It was eight o'clock on the morning of the trial that he reached Cork. He had accomplished the whole distance, there and back, one hundred and eighty miles, in thirty-eight hours. With lightning-like swiftness the news spread through the town that O'Connell was on his way thither. Despondency gave place to hope, and it was felt that if any man could save the accused that man would soon be there.

Meanwhile, the judges had taken their seats. O'Connell's letter was read; but it was impossible,

said Baron Pennefather, to postpone the business of the court. The trial proceeded. Four men were found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged in a week. The jury had taken five minutes to consider their verdict. What of the rest? Would O'Connell never come? The excitement was at fever-point when suddenly a mighty shout from the crowd outside told that he was there. A minute afterwards he entered the court. Bowing to the Bench, and apologising for the unprofessional costume in which he appeared before them, he obtained permission to break his fast while listening to the details of what had occurred preceding his arrival. With the help of a written deposition of the principal witness, which the Solicitor-General had suppressed, he tore to shreds the whole case for the prosecution. Under his cross-examination, the Crown witnesses involved themselves in such a labyrinth of contradiction and confusion that one of them, reduced to confess himself a liar, bawled out in agony — "It 's little I thought to have met you here to-day, Mr. O'Connell!" The same evidence which had served to hang four men served to acquit the rest. Never in Ireland had justice been rendered with so much dramatic effect as it was on this occasion. It was, perhaps without exception, the greatest of all O'Connell's forensic triumphs.

But the fact that it was possible for men to be so lightly hanged was an additional reason for subjecting the executive to the control of a domestic legislature; and, returning to Darrynane, O'Connell poured forth in quick succession letter after letter to

the people of Ireland, urging the necessity of a vigorous attempt to procure the repeal of the Act of Union. In regard to law reform, he professed himself a "thorough Benthamite." "I truly believe," he wrote, "that there is not in Turkey anything more radically despotic towards the poor than the present system of magisterial law." Once more he called on the Protestants to join with the Catholics in trying to obtain justice for their common country.

"Join with us," he wrote, "to serve that country; join with us to lessen burthens, to diminish irresponsible power, to increase commerce and manufactures; to establish popular rights, to crush aristocratical monopoly, and to build up a system of peaceable, rational freedom, which shall exterminate grand-jury jobbing, which shall annihilate corporation plunder, which shall secure for every man his right to select his representative, and protect him, by the secrecy of a ballot, in the exercise of that selection, and which, in fine, shall give to Irishmen a name, and make Ireland 'great, glorious, and free.'"

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CHAPTER XI.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM AND TITHES.

1830–1832.

ON 4th February, 1830, the first day of the session, O'Connell took his seat, without remark, in the House of Commons. He was verging on fifty-five — an age at which most men find it difficult to adapt themselves to new conditions of activity. True, Grattan had been even older when he entered the English Parliament, in 1805; but he had enjoyed what O'Connell never had — the benefit of a parliamentary training; and over against his success there was Flood's failure to set. Twenty-five years had elapsed since O'Connell entered public life; for twenty years he had been the actual, if not always the acknowledged, leader of the Irish Catholics; for the last five years he had been the most important factor in the political life of Ireland, and his influence was not confined to Ireland alone. In England his utterances attracted almost as much notice as those of the Prime Minister. In Europe, especially in Catholic countries, where the name of Ireland was

hardly known, his agitation of the Catholic question had restored its ancient fame. Let the reader turn to any old newspaper, English, Irish, or Continental, belonging to the years 1827 to 1847, and the name he is sure oftenest to encounter will be that of O'Connell. His enemies said that he had attained a fictitious importance, and they hoped that he would speedily find his level in the House of Commons. But competent judges felt little doubt of his success in a parliamentary career. For himself, being anxious to get the ordeal of his maiden speech over as soon as possible, he spoke the same evening in support of the Amendment to the Address. It was a short speech, but it was to the point, and at the conclusion of it he was warmly cheered from all sides. Next day he wrote to his cousin Sugrue: "I am fast learning the tone and temper of the House, and in a week or so you will find me a constant speaker. I will soon be struggling to bring forward Irish business."

He kept his word in both respects. During the session he spoke frequently, seldom, indeed, at any length, except on the Distress of the Country, on 23rd March; when he moved the repeal of the Vestry Act of 1827, and when arraigning the conduct of the Irish administration, and particularly of the Solicitor-General Doherty, in connection with the trials for the Doneraile conspiracy, on 12th May; but there was scarcely a debate of any importance to which he did not contribute his quota. He presented petitions in favour of the abolition of slavery, and one from Drogheda for the repeal of the Union, and spoke in

support of parliamentary reform, law reform, the abolition of the game laws, the removal of disabilities attaching to the Jews, and in opposition to Dr. Phillimore's proposal for rendering divorce easy. It is true that he never entirely succeeded in removing the prejudices which his reputation as an agitator had created, and there was always a tendency in certain circles to regard his brogue as a sign of inferiority. But he won the esteem of the House, and though at first he found some difficulty in "catching the speaker's eye," he speedily established a reputation for dialectical ability, practical good sense, and unflagging zeal in the discharge of the hard work that fell to his share in committee. There is a story told by O'Neill Daunt that, while the Reform Bill was under discussion, the speeches of its friends and foes were one day canvassed at Lady Beauchamp's. On O'Connell's name being mentioned, some critic fastidiously said, "Oh, a broguing Irish fellow! Who would listen to *him*! I always walk out of the House when he opens his lips." "Come, Peel," said old Lord Westmoreland, "let me hear your opinion." "My opinion candidly is," replied Peel, "that if I wanted an efficient and eloquent advocate, I would readily give up all the other orators of whom we have been talking, provided I had with me this same broguing Irish fellow."

During the Easter recess O'Connell paid a visit to Ireland. He was still bent on seeing what could be done for Ireland by the combined effort of Catholics and Protestants, and to this end, on 6th April, he started a "Society of the Friends of Ireland." The

object of the society was to pave the way for the repeal of the Union by obliterating ancient animosities. But that no one who had the interests of Ireland at heart, and to whom repeal seemed either unnecessary or undesirable, might be deterred from joining it, the subject was only mentioned as one of the many grievances to the redress of which the efforts of the society were to be directed. As Lawless, to whom such stratagems seemed contemptible, said, "Mr. O'Connell knows or thinks that 'the longest way round is the shortest way home,' and accordingly has put that most vitally important question . . . the Repeal of the Union — where? why as the twenty-first article in his Litany of Evils!" That Government might interfere to suppress the new society O'Connell thought possible, but not at all likely. In any case, as he wrote to Richard Barrett, they would have to make an Act of Parliament against him individually, by name, if they intended to prevent him from "reconciling Irishmen to each other, and combining the great majority, if not all of them, for the utility of our common but oppressed country."

What he had deemed unlikely, however, actually happened. Hardly had he returned to London than the Lord-Lieutenant, the Duke of Northumberland, issued a proclamation suppressing the society. The policy of "thus far and no farther" was evidently to be rigidly carried out. This was bad; but it was still worse when the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to assimilate the stamp dues in Ireland to those of England, and to raise the excise on spirits.

The proposal at once elicited a strong protest from O'Connell. But his protest was unheeded, and, seeing the necessity for stronger measures, he advised a run on the Bank of Ireland for gold.

"The time is come," he wrote to his friend Philip Barron, "when Ireland should one and all rouse itself to fling off the administration of the Duke of Wellington. . . . This is the very time to attack his government in every legal and constitutional way. . . . Call, therefore, on the people — the honest, unsophisticated people — to send in their bank notes of every description, and to get gold."

His letter was brought before Parliament. Replying to the strictures passed on it, he disclaimed any intention of defending his action to the House. He would, he declared, say what he liked and do what he liked outside it without asking its consent. By agitation Ireland had become strong; by agitation she had put down her bitter enemies; by agitation had her conscience been set free; by agitation had Irish freedom been achieved, and by agitation should it be secured. The Emancipation Act, it was said, had failed to restore tranquillity to Ireland, but whose fault had it been? How, for instance, had Government behaved towards the Catholic Bar? For himself, he contemned the name of office. He had given his advice to his countrymen, and whenever he felt it necessary he should continue to do so, careless whether it pleased or displeased the House or any mad person outside it. The threat proved sufficient. On the first of July he was able to announce that the

stamp duties had been abandoned. The increase on spirits remained; but, as the distillers did not complain, he thought it unnecessary to throw away "any good agitation" over the matter.

George IV. died on 26th June, and on 24th July Parliament was dissolved. Invitations at once poured in upon O'Connell from numerous constituencies — from Clare, Drogheda, Wexford, Waterford, Galway, Meath, Louth, Cork, Kerry — all alike anxious to have him as their representative. It was difficult to determine to which he should give the preference; but after hesitating between Wexford and Waterford he finally decided in favour of the latter; and for Waterford county he was accordingly returned, along with Lord George Beresford. The elections over, he retired in August to Darrynane, whence he issued in rapid succession letter after letter to the Irish people on every question of public importance — the revolution in France, the insurrection in Belgium, parliamentary reform, commutation of tithes, etc., but all alike tending to one object — the repeal of the Union.

"I close this, my first letter," he wrote on 6th, September "by an earnest appeal to the People of Ireland of all classes, sects and persuasions, to unite at this most important and soul-stirring period in simultaneous efforts to restore their native land to her station among the nations. Let those efforts be peaceable, legal, constitutional, open and undisguised; but let them be active and unceasing until Ireland is righted and her Parliament restored."

His letters were widely read, and exercised a

profound influence on the country. Day by day the movement gained in volume and intensity. O'Connell himself was astonished at the enthusiasm which his words had created. Now was the time, he wrote to his friend Michael Staunton, of the *Register*, to agitate the great question. The one thing needful was a permanent society "in order to collect funds *in primo loco*, to collect funds *in secundo loco*, and to collect funds, thirdly and lastly, because we have both mind and body within us, and all we want is the means of keeping the machine in regular and supple motion." Having settled the subject in his own mind, he did not let the grass grow under his feet. Few men could have gone through the hard work which he undertook. On Thursday, 7th October, he attended "the best public dinner I was ever at," in Killarney. On Friday he addressed "a most numerous meeting," in the court-house of Tralee, "in honour of the French and Belgic revolutions." Next day there was another meeting in the same place against the Subletting and Vestry Bills, for radical Reform, and Repeal of the Union. On Monday he was present, and of course spoke, at a dinner at Kanturk; Tuesday saw him in Cork speaking at another public dinner; on Wednesday there was a mass-meeting in Youghall, on Thursday a public dinner in Waterford, followed next day by a meeting for redress of grievances.

Arriving a day or two afterwards in Dublin, he at once set about founding a permanent society for the propagation of the Repeal agitation. A small preliminary meeting was to be followed by a larger one

to sanction the establishment of an "Anti-Union Association or Society for Legislative Relief." But the project had hardly taken shape when the Government, in the person of the Chief Secretary, Sir Henry Hardinge, stepped in and suppressed it. O'Connell's indignation found vent in an attack on the Chief Secretary of a character so personal that the latter immediately demanded satisfaction for it. But O'Connell, while expressing his perfect readiness "to retract and atone for any fact alleged by him not founded in proof," refused absolutely, "be the consequences of such disclaimer what they might," to afford him the satisfaction of firing at him. To the taunt of cowardice afterwards levelled at him in Parliament, he replied, "I am content. I am vindicated before my God, and I will not condescend to vindicate myself before you." Two days after the suppression of the "Anti-Union Association" he founded a society called the "Irish Volunteers for the Repeal of the Union." This being in turn suppressed, he started a series of public breakfasts in Holmes's Hotel, on Ussher's Quay, at which he and his friends drank coffee and talked politics. In resorting to this stratagem he announced his intention, if Government thought fit to proclaim the "breakfasts," of establishing "political luncheons." Should these prove distasteful to his grace, the Duke of Wellington, he would substitute "political dinners." When these were suppressed, he would invite his friends, after the manner of certain ladies, "for tea and tracts," and so on till supper was reached. His announcement was received with screams of laughter,

and Government, feeling that it was making itself ridiculous, withdrew from the contest. Accordingly, during his absence in London, the weekly meetings in Holmes's Hotel served as a rallying centre for the advocates of Repeal. But in Parliament, though he presented petitions in favour of the repeal of the Union from Waterford and other places, the question made little progress, owing to the absorbing interest felt in parliamentary reform.

On 16th November, Wellington, having been defeated on his proposed revision of the Civil List, in consequence of the declaration against reform, resigned office, and was succeeded by Earl Grey. The Irish, who had contributed materially to this result, were rewarded by the re-appointment of the Marquis of Anglesey as Viceroy. But the pleasing anticipations with which his appointment were at first hailed were speedily damped when it was found that his Chief Secretary was to be Edward Stanley, afterwards Earl of Derby, of whose doubtful radicalism the electors of Preston had recently expressed their disapprobation by preferring "Orator" Hunt as their representative in Parliament. "I fear," O'Connell wrote on 29th November, "that the Marquis of Anglesey is getting into bad hands. The only good thing about him is his determination, which is fixed, to pack off the Gregorys, etc., from the Castle." Unfortunately, even this little scrap of consolation had before long to be abandoned. The fact was that Anglesey, like many other politicians, had come to the conclusion that the concession of emancipation had or ought to have satisfied Ireland. All that she,

in his opinion, wanted was peace. Agitation was the only thing that could prevent her prospering, and for himself he was resolved to put down agitation with a strong hand. There was something of ostrich-like stupidity in the view he took of the situation. Instead of frankly admitting that emancipation, as interpreted by the Irish government, had failed to satisfy a single person, and trying in statesmanlike fashion to solve the new problem that had arisen, by giving practical effect to it, he contented himself with crying Peace, peace, when there was really no peace, unmindful of the fact that no agitator, however powerful, can create an agitation out of nothing, and that even your Hyde Park orator, who each Sunday harrangues his little knot of listeners, has his *raison d'etre.* "Things have come to that pass," he wrote to his wife, "that the question is whether O'Connell or I shall govern Ireland." It was complacently said; for of his ability to put O'Connell down he made little question.

But before resorting to measures of repression, he determined to make an appeal to those motives of self-interest by which O'Connell was supposed to regulate his conduct, offering to make him a judge, or "anything, in fact, if he would give up the agitation." "Lord Anglesey," O'Connell wrote to his friend, Newton Bennett, "sent for me and talked to me for two hours, to prevail on me to join the Government; he went so far as to discuss my private affairs in order to prevail on me to repair my fortunes!" His Lordship recorded the result of the interview next day to Lord Cloncurry:

"O'Connell is my *avant courier*. He starts to-day with more mischief in hand than I have yet seen him charged with. I saw him yesterday for an hour and a half. I made no impression on him whatever; and I am now thoroughly convinced that he is bent upon desperate agitation. All this will produce no change in my course and conduct. . . . I deprecate agitation. . . . I pray for peace and repose. But if the sword is really to be drawn, . . . if, for the protection of the State, I am driven to the dire necessity of again turning soldier, why then I must endeavour to get back into old habits, and live amongst a people I love in a state of misery and distress."

"Poor Anglesey!" O'Connell one day remarked to Purcell O'Gorman; "the unfortunate man was not wicked, but misguided." "Why," replied O'Gorman, "that is exactly what he says of you. One day I visited him he said to me, 'That unfortunate O'Connell means well, but he is misguided.'" It was not long before the two came into collision.

Returning to Ireland on 18th December, O'Connell received another tremendous ovation. The welcome accorded to him contrasted strangely with the chilling reception meted out to Anglesey, when he landed a week later at Kingstown. People, remembering how he had advocated emancipation, had intended to greet him in another fashion; but his refusal or inability to remove the "old warriors" from the Castle, and the appointment of "Dirty Doherty" as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, had deprived him of the popularity he had acquired during his first viceroyalty. But he was, or affected

to be, little moved by this display of hostile feeling towards him. He had come over determined to suppress agitation, even if he went the length of clapping the arch-agitator himself in prison. The day following his arrival, Sunday, the 26th, he proclaimed a meeting of the "Tradesmen of Dublin," which was to have been held next day at Phibsborough, as calculated to lead to a disturbance of the public peace. The proclamation was hardly an hour old when O'Connell issued another, in his own name, countermanding the meeting. Government, at any rate, was not to have the credit alone of preserving the public peace. The proclamation of the Trades meeting was followed up by a general order to all magistrates to suppress all meetings, wheresoever held, for the purpose of effecting political changes by forcible means. As the magistrates were to a man anti-repealers, the interpretation they were likely to place on the qualifying words, "forcible means," practically amounted to a suppression of the right of public meeting. At a breakfast in Holmes's Hotel, at which some 450 persons were present, O'Connell roundly denounced the order as an illegal interference with the right of petitioning, and at his suggestion a society was immediately formed, calling itself "A General Association for Ireland to prevent illegal meetings and protect the exercise of the sacred right of petition."

The society met for the first time on 6th January, 1831, in the Parliamentary Intelligence Offices, in Stephen's Street. It was at once proclaimed. Thereupon O'Connell announced his intention of

constituting himself a society, and carrying on the work of agitation, with the assistance of the press and Edward Dwyer, the former secretary of the Catholic Association. At his invitation, three hundred persons assembled to dine at Hayes's tavern. He was engaged in addressing them when two police magistrates entered the room and ordered them to disperse. After a somewhat heated discussion, O'Connell advised compliance with the order, which, though illegal, nevertheless bore the appearance of law, and the meeting, after cheering lustily for "Repeal," quietly separated. The dispersal of the dinner at Hayes's was followed by a proclamation prohibiting all and every kind of association whatever. It was a strong step, and O'Connell that same night sent to the press a letter blazing with indignation. He had, he wrote, one word of caution to address to his fellow-countrymen in regard to this fourth proclamation. Its object was to gag the Irish people. Some time ago, he had advised everybody to exchange his notes for gold. The time might come to put his advice in practice. He called upon them for the present to pause. Let them watch the motives of the vile underlings of despotic authority. Let them wait patiently until they saw whether the press was to be assailed. Until then he would remain neutral. But should the press be assailed; should prosecution extend to this, their last hope of freedom, then he would use all the energies of his mind, and whatever influence he possessed, to lessen the power of the paper-makers and to produce a general gold currency. He

concluded with again cautioning them against secret societies, against illegal oaths, and against every every species of tumult, violence, or outrage. The repeal of the Union could not long be delayed by their enemies: it might be fatally retarded by their own misconduct. A day or two afterwards, there was a Repeal meeting in St. Thomas's parish. O'Connell appeared in deep mourning. He was determined, he said, to wear it until the obnoxious Act under which their associations were proclaimed was repealed. Nay, more: he had resolved not to taste any excisable article until that event took place. That very morning, when tea and coffee had been placed before him, he had put them aside and contented himself with milk.

Meeting next morning, 18th January, with a few friends at Hayes's tavern for breakfast, he was, on returning home, arrested on a warrant charging him with conspiracy with several other persons to violate and evade the proclamation. Being taken to the head Police Office, he was required to give bail, himself in £1000, and two securities each in £500: his associates, Lawless, Steele, Barrett, Dwyer, Reynolds, Redmond, and Clooney, being at the same time bound over in £200, and two securities each in £100, to appear when called upon for trial. When the news of the arrest became known, Dublin was thrown into a state of wild excitement. "I never," wrote O'Mara to Lord Cloncurry, "witnessed anything so turbulent and angry as the populace were in Dublin this day — not even in the height of '98." Indeed, Government had to thank O'Connell, who

took the earliest opportunity of enforcing obedience on the people, that a serious riot did not take place. The indictment consisted of thirty-one counts — the first fourteen charging the traversers with having violated the provisions of the Act 10, George IV., better known as "the worse than Algerine Act"; the remaining seventeen with fraud and duplicity against Government. True bills were returned by the grand jury on 25th January, and the trial was fixed for 17th February.

As O'Connell's conduct exposed him at the time to much adverse criticism, which certain historians and biographers have since endorsed, it will help to a better understanding of it if one or two facts are clearly borne in mind. First, that the Irish government was solely responsible for the prosecution; second, that the Grey administration was pledged to Reform, and, being particularly weak in debating power in the House of Commons, could ill afford to lose O'Connell's support; third, that "the worse than Algerine Act" was a temporary device, bound to expire with the expiration of the Parliament that had created it. The conditions for a compromise existed. The Whigs wanted O'Connell's assistance in the House of Commons; he wanted to avoid a trial, which he calculated would last a week, which might be attended by public disturbances, and followed by pecuniary or corporal punishment for himself. It was said he was afraid to go to gaol. His action could bear that construction; the motive, however, was not fear, but the desire to inflict a defeat on Anglesey's government by rendering the

prosecution abortive — a very different matter. It was a game in which neither he nor the administration could afford to show their cards openly. Hence the conflicting rumours that gained currency of defeat on the part of O'Connell; of retreat on the part of Government. Hence, too, the confident assertions of Stanley, in the House of Commons, that Government had no intention of compromising the prosecution, while all the time a tacit compromise, of which Stanley was ignorant, actually existed.

The course of events was as follows: on 18th January O'Connell was arrested; next week the grand jury returned a true bill against him, whereupon he demurred to the first fourteen counts in the indictment, charging him with a breach of "the worse than Algerine Act," and pleaded not guilty to the remaining seventeen, charging him with conspiracy under the Common Law. The demurrers were fixed to be heard on 7th February. In the midst of the proceedings, and while the public mind was violently excited, a communication reached O'Connell, through one "in the confidence of the ministry in England," that the latter were ready to do everything for Ireland short of Repeal "provided he would give up the question for the present." O'Connell, to whom a bird in the hand was always worth more than two in the bush, thereupon appealed to Lords Meath and Cloncurry, who "have it in their power to put themselves at the head of the popular party in Ireland, and to do more good to the country, and prevent more evil, than any two

persons ever had before," offering to assist Government in allaying the popular ferment if they would pledge themselves to the future support of Repeal. This they, however, refused to do. Thereupon O'Connell announced his attention of setting out for London on 31st January, and accordingly on that day he proceeded, accompanied by an immense concourse of well-wishers, bearing banners with "Repeal of the Union," "Erin go bragh," "Hail to the Liberator," and other patriotic mottoes on them, from his house in Merrion Square to Kingstown.

It was a stormy day and, as he neared the pier, snow, long known as "the O'Connell snow," began to fall heavily. Darkness set in, and everybody, except a few of his more intimate friends, believing that he had embarked, returned as quickly as possible to their several homes. Anglesey, thinking he had scored another point, wrote:

"O'Connell embarked for England this afternoon, not venturing to await the judgment of the court upon his pleas. By this he forfeits his recognizances, himself in £1000, and his securities in £500 each, or, if he returns, there is no doubt he will be committed."

As a matter of fact, while he was writing, O'Connell was quietly toasting his toes by his own fireside. He had received information that he was to be called up next day for trial. On 5th February, he asked leave to withdraw his demurrers, and plead "not guilty" to the whole indictment. Government, anxious not to prolong the case, granted his application. Time pressed, and he was desirous of being in his place in the House. On 11th February he

applied personally to the Attorney-General to allow the trial to stand over till Easter term, "provided there be nothing in such postponement inconsistent with your views of the interests of the Crown and the public." The Attorney-General replied that he could not suspend the trial, and was congratulated by Stanley on having got the arch-agitator on the hip. O'Connell thereupon offered to let judgment go against him by default on the first fourteen counts, on condition that the Attorney-General withdrew the remaining counts charging him with conspiracy, and consented to postpone judgment till the first day of Easter term. In other words he agreed, on condition of not forfeiting his recognisances, and being allowed to advocate Reform in the House of Commons, to admit that he had incurred the penalties due to the breach of "the worse than Algerine Act." The Attorney-General assented to the arrangement, and Government congratulated itself upon the easy victory it had won. Before three months had elapsed, it was patent to the blindest intelligence that the victory was in reality a crushing defeat, and that O'Connell had out-manœuvred Blackburne on his own ground.

On the day originally appointed for the trial, 17th February, O'Connell arrived in London. On the 28th there was a brisk exchange of arms between him and Stanley, who, in the exuberance of his triumph, had given out that the former, fearing conviction, had solicited a compromise of the prosecution. This O'Connell roundly denied. No friend of his, he declared, had, with any authority from

him, or to his knowledge, ever made any such application; but he thought it right to say that persons who represented themselves as authorised by the Crown had made overtures *to* him, and that he had written back refusing to accede to the terms. Probably no one was more surprised at this revelation of a secret intrigue than Stanley himself. Next day, Lord John Russell submitted the Reform Bill to the House of Commons. On 8th March, O'Connell rose to support the measure. "Giving his wig a twitch lest he should lose it," says an onlooker, he spoke for three hours, explaining that while the Bill fell far short of his own wishes in regard to universal suffrage, vote by ballot and short parliaments, it was nevertheless a liberal and extensive measure, and as such would receive his unqualified support. The fact was, he had come to regard Reform as an indispensable step to Repeal, believing, like so many of his contemporaries, that extension of the franchise, and destruction of rotten boroughs, necessarily implied greater liberality on the part of the Legislature. He was soon to discover that Hodge and his master were pretty much of one opinion as regarded Ireland. Easter arrived, but his presence in London was more than ever necessary to the ministry, and, with the consent of the Attorney-General for Ireland, judgment was postponed till May. On 22nd April, however, ministers having been defeated on a clause of the Bill, dissolved Parliament. With the dissolution "the worse than Algerine Act" expired, and O'Connell was once more a free man.

Returning to Ireland, he threw himself, heart and

soul, into electioneering business. The cry that resounded throughout England of "the bill, the whole bill and nothing but the bill" found through him an echo also in Ireland. People of the stamp of George Ensor said that in his enthusiasm for Reform he had forgotten all about Repeal. It was not so.

"Let no one," he wrote in a "Letter to the People of Ireland," "deceive you, and say I am abandoning my principles of anti-unionism. It is false. I am decidedly of opinion that the repeal of the union is the only measure by which Irish prosperity and Irish freedom can be secured. . . . But it is only in a reformed parliament that the question can be properly, coolly, and dispassionately discussed."

The result of the elections in Ireland strengthened the hands of the Reformers. O'Connell himself was returned for county Kerry, in the room of the Knight of Kerry, and the opening day of the new parliament, 12th June, saw him in his customary seat in the House of Commons.

But Reform, though it still continued to hold the first place in his consideration, was not the only, or indeed the most pressing, subject that occupied his attention. Distress, always chronic in Ireland, had again been intensified by the recurrence of a bad harvest. During the winter of 1830–31 there had been local outbursts of agrarian crime, attended by a general indisposition to pay tithes. In March Bishop Doyle published a "Letter," which in fact amounted to a substantial pamphlet of 133 pages, "on the establishment of a legal provision for the Irish poor; and on the origin, nature, and destination of Church

property." The desirability of establishing a system of poor-law relief in Ireland was one which sat very near the Bishop's heart, but on this point he had hitherto had the misfortune to differ from O'Connell, who, in his examination before the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1825, had denounced the project as tending to pauperise and demoralise the nation. It was, therefore, an agreeable surprise for the Bishop to receive from him a letter beginning —

"My Lord, you have convinced me —Your pamphlet on the necessity of making a legal provision for the destitute Irish poor has completely convinced me. The candour and distinctness with which you state the arguments against that provision, and the clear and satisfactory manner in which you have answered and refuted those arguments, have quite overpowered my objections, and rendered me an unwilling, but not the less sincere, convert to your opinions."

In his "Letter" Doyle had suggested the abolition of tithes and the substitution for it of a land tax not exceeding one-tenth of the value of the land. The produce of this tax and the Church lands, placed at the disposal of the Parliamentary Commissioners, would enable them to provide amply for the support of the poor, and to promote works of public necessity or national improvement. O'Connell adopted his suggestion, with certain modifications.

"We must," he wrote, "come forward at once. The people *must* be fed. The tithes do certainly afford a great and natural resource, or rather a crown rent. As a national commutation of tithes, less, much less, than the tenth of the fair rent-roll will be abundantly sufficient ;

in fact, the one-half of the actual weight of the tithes. Next, the estates of the absentees should bear a double proportion of this crown rent, or land tax. Indeed, a treble proportion would be but strict justice."

Parliament had hardly met before the necessity of tithe legislation, in some shape or form, became apparent. In June, resistance to the payment of tithes led to an armed conflict between the peasantry and yeomanry at Newtownbarry, in county Wexford, when eighteen persons lost their lives, and many more were wounded. The "massacre" made a deep impression on the popular mind, and the sorrow and indignation it awakened found expression in verse which, if crude in form, was pregnant enough with passion:

"The balls of the yeomanry flew far and wide,
The maidens plunged, shrieking, in Slaney's red tide,
And the blood of the peasantry gush'd o'er the turf,
As their lips foamed in death, like the rock-beating surf.

"And there lay the mother, distorted and pale —
Yet her butchers were praised by the *Warder* and *Mail;*
For our judges are silent, and justice unknown,
Though the dark tale of carnage o'er Europe hath flown.

"And the widows of Wexford are loud in their wail,
And curse the proud priesthood of Mammon and Baal:
For the poor and the guiltless by bigotry's sword
Were murdered for tithe — in the name of the Lord."

"The Newtownbarry affair," wrote Bishop Doyle, a week or two after the sad event, "was a certain, if not necessary, effect of the proceedings of Government with respect to the magistracy, the constabulary, and yeomen. Last Christmas, when Mr. O'Connell was forcing Government to adopt strong measures, you recollect how I besought Mr. Stanley and the friends of Lord D—— to send here a few regiments of the English militia, if necessary, to strengthen the military, and not to call out the Orange party in the person of the yeomanry. But at that time they feared O'Connell over much, and precipitated themselves into new difficulties of greater and more lasting magnitude. They made themselves the debtors of a party with whom they should have no connexion, and thereby committed themselves to sustain old abuses, to oppose the just wishes of the people and of the enlightened public, and here they are now, pampered with a magistracy as ignorant and corrupt as can well be conceived, and which they fear too much; with a constabulary and yeomanry all Orange, who hate the government with all their heart and soul, and take their instructions more from Lord Farnham and his associates than from Lord Anglesey or his colleagues in office. These armed banditti, urged by their leaders, are at this moment using every possible exertion to excite the people to insurrection, thereby to defeat the Ministry and Reform; whilst the mass of the people have resigned all confidence in Government, as if leagued with their inveterate foes, and are at this moment more liable to be led astray than they were at any period these ten years past, if some Mr. O'Connell appeared to merely give a direction to their passions. This is the real state of Ireland now, so far as the administration of its affairs and the temper of the people

compose its state ; and I need not add that order can never arise out of such a state of things. As to trusting to the ordinary course of law for redress of wrongs, etc., it is a weakness approaching to fatuity. There is not a sheriff in Ireland who is not too strong for the judges of assize. Even the assistant barristers cannot do justice in the smallest things where party-spirit enters ; nor are they all inclined to act justly ; and as for the magistrates, their corruption, like the wisdom of Solomon, surpasses all that has been told of it. I assure you that even in this country it is quite shocking."

The Irish government answered the refusal to pay tithes with the threat of an Arms Bill, which would have delivered over the Irish peasantry, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of the Orangemen. The proposal, however, met with a cool reception in Parliament, and O'Connell had little difficulty in knocking it on the head. But he failed to persuade the House to consent to disarm the yeomanry, and was unsuccessful in obtaining any material alteration in the Irish Reform Bill. In September his health broke down, and for three weeks his attendance in the House was restricted to an hour or two daily. He, however, supported Lord Ebrington's motion of confidence in the ministry on 10th October, and the latter having trouble enough on hand in England tried to sound him, through Sir Henry Parnell and Bishop Doyle, as to the possibility of inducing him to refrain from renewing his agitation of Repeal. His popularity in Ireland was at its zenith. He could, the Bishop asserted, have little difficulty in getting twenty or thirty thousand pounds from the

country, and it was doubtful if he would surrender popularity and emolument for anything ministers could offer him. But if O'Connell refused to impair his popularity by countenancing a rumour — apparently well-founded — that the attorney-generalship of Ireland was at his disposal, he did not decline what was due to him as a lawyer, and accepted a patent of precedence at the Irish Bar offered to him through Lord Duncannon. Believing, too, in the sincerity of the promises that the ministry were willing to try "a change of system" in the government of Ireland, even to the extent of "promoting off" Anglesey and Stanley, he agreed to confine himself to Reform until the Bill was carried. At the same time, however, he pointed out that the state of affairs might be rendered worse than precarious unless the promised change of system commenced immediately. The past might easily be buried in oblivion if means were taken to satisfy the people of Ireland that some practical good might be expected. But if it was imagined safe to delay giving proofs of a change, he could only assure those who thought so that they would find themselves sadly mistaken.

Two months elapsed. Anglesey and Stanley still continued at their posts, and not the slightest sign of a change of system had been given. Meanwhile, the state of affairs had grown worse. True, there was nothing in Ireland to compare with the riots that were taking place at the same time in England; but the tithe difficulty remained, and at Carrickshock, in county Kilkenny, there had recently been another

collision between the peasantry and the process servers, in which eighteen of the latter had been killed. The distress of the country was appalling. "Ireland," O'Connell wrote bitterly to Lord Duncannon in December, "is sinking into decrepitude. In Cork, in three parishes alone there are 27,000 paupers." The misery and the wretchedness of the people — famine-stricken, misgoverned, harassed by Orangemen and tithe-proctors, and trembling at the approach of a new and deadly disease, the cholera, — preyed upon him day and night. If only he could induce Irishmen of all sects and persuasions to unite for the common good of their country! Nothing, nothing, he felt, could be done until they had recovered the management of their own affairs. People talked to him of poor laws. The arguments and eloquence of Bishop Doyle had wrung a reluctant acquiescence in their necessity from him. But after all, what was the good of poor-law relief? The real grievance lay elsewhere, and so long as Ireland groaned under the incubus of the Union, so long as good government was denied it, how could any progress be made? Would poor laws help to develop the country, make Irishmen more self-reliant and more independent? Would they prevent these constantly recurring periods of famine and distress, ward off the cholera, or secure to the labourer the just fruits of his labour? It was not charity Irishmen wanted, but good government. Ireland was big enough and capable enough to support her eight millions of inhabitants. The weak, the aged, the infirm, the widow, and the orphan, they would always

have with them ; for these provision could be made. But a nation with the resources of a country like Ireland does not want alms. A poor law ! Yes. But a poor law for the whole nation — the restoration of her domestic legislature — that was what was wanted.

His renunciation of the poor laws brought him into open conflict with Bishop Doyle. But he had made up his mind, and neither the sarcasm nor the logic of his adversary could move him. He would make another effort to unite Irishmen on a common platform : he would demand justice in the shape of good government from a Reformed Parliament, and if it was refused he would raise the standard of Repeal. Availing himself, accordingly, of a suggestion made by Henry Grattan, junior, he started a National Political Union, for placing Ireland upon a basis of equality of franchise and privilege with England. The society served the double purpose of furnishing a counterpoise to the Trades Political Union, which under its president, Marcus Costello, went at times too quick, at other times too slow, for him, and of providing him with a means of keeping in touch with the nation.

Parliament met on 6th December. The third Reform Bill was read in the Commons, a second time, and committees of both Houses were appointed to inquire into the tithe laws. It reassembled after the Christmas vacation on 17th January, 1832. On 8th February O'Connell presented a petition from Waterford complaining of the tithe system. Government expressed its determination to enforce the

law; but the statement was somewhat mitigated by the appearance, a few days afterwards, of the reports of both Houses pointing to a complete extinction of tithes, in the interests of the Church, and the lasting welfare of Ireland. "The tithes," O'Connell wrote to Fitzpatrick on 11th February, "are given up. Depend on this." The announcement proved somewhat premature. In March he returned to Ireland, being specially retained at the Cork Spring Assizes, in the case of Kearney v. Sarsfield to try the validity of the will of Thomas Rochford. His arrival in Cork was made the occasion of a great Repeal demonstration. The enthusiasm of the people delighted him. "There never was," he wrote, "such a scene as we had yesterday. It is impossible to form an idea of it without having been a spectator. It beat all the processions I ever witnessed all to nothing. It is decisive of Repeal." During his absence, Stanley introduced a Bill to enforce the recovery of tithe arrears. It speedily became law; but proved, as was predicted of it, worse than useless, and later in the session the composition of tithes was made universal and compulsory. But all interest in the proceedings of Parliament had by that time expired. Its days were numbered. On 7th June, the royal assent had been given by commission to the Reform Bill, and Parliament, having been prorogued on 16th August, was formally dissolved on 3rd December. Men's thoughts were fixed on the future.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE WHIGS AND COERCION.

1832–1835.

O'CONNELL returned to Ireland towards the latter end of July. He had for some time been feeling far from well, and suffered much from sleeplessness; but the bracing air of Darrynane soon restored him to his usual state of buoyant health.

"You will be happy to hear," he wrote on 11th August to his friend Fitzpatrick, "that my health is — blessed be God! — quite restored. There never was so great a change in the tone of animal functions in any man within so short a period. I enjoy my mountain hunting on foot as much as ever I did, and expect, with the help of God, to be quite prepared for as vigorous a winter campaign as ever I carried on. It is quite necessary."

Of the necessity, indeed, of doing something to put an end to the terrible tithe war, that was raging with unabated fury, there could not be the slightest question. But how was this to be done?

The committees of both Houses appointed to inquire into the matter had suggested the complete extinction of tithes as the only solution likely to satisfy the Irish peasantry. The Irish government, far from adopting the suggestion, determined to enforce the payment of them. They succeeded in collecting £12,000 of arrears, at a cost of £14,000 and considerable loss of life. Driven from this position, they passed a compulsory tithe composition bill, as if it was the *mode* in which the clergy of the Established Church were to be paid, and not the *payment* itself, that had revolted the people. O'Connell advised their extinction, and the compensation of existing Protestant incumbents. His advice was despised, notwithstanding a pointed allusion to Lord Milton's refusal to pay taxes till the Reform Bill was passed. The difficulty continuing, he addressed a letter to the National Political Union on the subject. The letter concluded :

"First, I am determined never again voluntarily to pay tithes ; second, I am determined never again voluntarily to pay vestry cess ; third, I am determined never to buy one single article sold for tithes or vestry cess. Such are my three individual resolutions ; let every other man act as he pleases. I have made up my mind to this course. I will not oppose the law: let it take its course ; but I decline paying to or buying from tithe proctors."

The doctrine of passive resistance, thus clearly enunciated, found plenty of adherents. As time went on, the struggle between the Government and the peasantry became more and more acute. Coercion, instead of curing the disease, merely drove it

inwards. Tithe prosecutions multiplied; so did agrarian outrages. The refusal to abolish tithes had resulted in a revival of "Whiteboyism," and for this result the Irish government must be held responsible.

Meanwhile, from his retreat at Darrynane, O'Connell threw off letter after letter — thirty in all — denouncing the government of Anglesey and Stanley, demanding the abolition of tithes, and preaching the repeal of the Union as the only adequate remedy for Irish grievances. In October he was specially retained at the Cork Assizes, in connection with certain trials arising out of the agrarian dispute, and it was not until the following month that he was able to repair to Dublin in order to take part in the impending electoral struggle. His popularity was unbounded. As he walked through the streets, people rushed to their doors to have a better look at him, or followed him in little knots at a respectful distance. Later in the month, he made a rousing speech at the Political Union, urging the electors everywhere to exact a repeal pledge from their candidates. His advice was followed to the very letter. No matter who the candidate, no matter what his claims, he was instantly rejected if he refused the pledge. The fact naturally detracted from the individual importance of those composing "O'Connell's tail," as his followers were half-humorously, half-sneeringly nicknamed, but at least it promised to ensure fidelity on the main point. Of the hundred and five members allotted to Ireland, eighty-five were returned in the Liberal interest, and of these eighty-five more than half were pledged Repealers.

AN EXTRAORDINARY ANIMAL.

FROM A PRINT IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

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Five were members of O'Connell's own family — the "Household Brigade," as they were called; comprising his three sons, Maurice, Morgan, and John, and his two sons-in-law, Christopher Fitzsimon, and Charles O'Connell, of Bahoss. His own unsolicited return for Dublin City he regarded "as perhaps the greatest triumph my countrymen have yet given me."

Parliament did not meet till 5th February, 1833. The condition of the country, in the meantime, was appalling. During the past twelve months, not less than nine thousand agrarian outrages, of which two hundred were homicides, had occurred. In several counties, in Kilkenny and Queen's county especially, the authority of the law had practically ceased to exist. Jurors would not convict, murders were rife, and intimidation almost universal. Even O'Connell, while insisting on the immediate removal of Anglesey and Stanley as the only means of restoring public confidence, had sadly to admit, and even to urge, the necessity of exceptional measures being taken.

"My Lord," he wrote to Lord Duncannon on 14th January, "you are the only person connected with power to whom I could write what I know and what I believe, and indeed, I should not feel at rest if I did not tell you that the Government cannot appreciate the exact state of this country. Stanley has had considerable success in enforcing the Tithes. He has overawed many, very many parishes, and there was an adequate force for that purpose; but the result is just what those who know Ireland foresaw—the spirit which is curbed by day walks abroad by night. 'Whiteboyism' is substituted for open meetings. *There is an almost universal organisation*

going on. It is, I repeat, *almost universal.* I do not believe there is any man in the rank of a comfortable farmer engaged—not one man probably entitled to vote. But all the poverty of our counties is being organised. There never yet was, as I believe, so general a disposition for that species of insurrectionary outrages. We will do all we can to check it. I believe that we will keep the county of Meath free, because we have a County Club in operation—persons in whom the people have confidence, and whose advice they will be likely to follow. You may be quite sure that, if I were not convinced of the frightful extent of the impending mischief, I would not trouble you. All I can add in the way of advice is—that the more troops are sent over here the better. In every point of view, it is best to increase the King's troops. If the Yeomanry are called out, the consequences may be terrific. Avoid that, of all things ; they will prove to be weakness, not strength. I know you will excuse me for my cause in troubling you at this length. But, indeed, you, who are acquainted with the history of Irish affairs, must have been prepared for this result. The insanity of delivering the country to so weak a man as Lord Anglesey, and so obstinate a maniac as Stanley, is unequalled, even in our annals."

Early in the forenoon of Tuesday, 5th February, O'Connell, at the head of his "Household Brigade," went down to the House of Commons, to be present at the opening of the first reformed Parliament. Taking his seat on the second opposition bench, he ranged his sons alongside him — a mark of parental pride the young men would gladly have avoided. His hopes beat high. The wrongs of Ireland called to Heaven for redress. Surely the ministry,

which owed its very existence to the votes of the Irish members, would seize the opportunity to heal the breach which misgovernment had made in the past by the introduction of remedial measures. An hour or two served to dispel the fond illusion. The Speech from the Throne, after alluding to the social condition of Ireland, where the "spirit of insubordination and violence" had "risen to the most fearful height," expressed the King's confidence in the readiness of Parliament "to adopt such measures of salutary precaution," and to entrust him with "such additional powers as may be found necessary for controlling and punishing the disturbers of the public peace, and for preserving the legislative union between the two countries." O'Connell's indignation at the baseness of the Whigs was intense. Lord Ormelie, afterwards Marquis of Breadalbane, in moving the Address, had the misfortune to add fuel to his wrath by an unlucky comparison between him and his fellow-Repealers, and "those harpies, or birds of prey, who soared over and watched the agonies of their victim, ready to pierce their destructive talons into its side." "What a curse was it for Ireland," O'Connell bitterly exclaimed, "that every popinjay you met in the streets, who was capable of uttering fifteen words, was sure to lard his sentences by sarcasms against Ireland!" But it was for Stanley—the real author of "the brutal and bloody speech"—that he reserved the vials of his wrath—for that minister, who, during his brief tenure of office, had accomplished what none of his predecessors had ever done, and united Irishmen in a consensus of opinion

as to his incapacity to govern the country; who, nevertheless, "lord of the ascendant," dictated his measures to the ministry. Four long nights the battle raged, and then came the division. O'Connell moved to refer the Address to a committee of the whole House; he was defeated by 428 votes to 40. A motion to couple coercion with "a close and diligent investigation into the causes of discontent in Ireland" shared a similar fate, and was defeated by 393 votes to 60.

Alas, for Ireland! Alas for the hopes which Reform had raised! People with a turn for epigram called the Government's policy a policy of "kicks and kindness." Unfortunately, the only thing certain about it was the kicks, of which there were enough and to spare. On 12th February Lord Althorp submitted certain proposals, to be embodied in a Bill for the abolition of vestry cess, the suppression of a number of bishoprics and Church livings, and the appropriation of the revenues thereby liberated to secular purposes. His proposals won O'Connell's gratitude. Perhaps, after all, the Whigs were going to do something for Ireland. Three days afterwards Earl Grey introduced a Bill into the House of Lords combining the provisions of the Proclamation Act, the Insurrection Act, the partial application of martial law, and the partial suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. The horror of it pierced O'Connell to the heart. Never, even while denouncing the Speech from the Throne as "bloody and brutal," with an emphasis that caused Lord John Russell to move that his words be taken down, had

he anticipated a measure so drastic in its operation as that which Government now submitted to Parliament. Never, even in the palmiest days of Tory absolutism, had such an atrocious attack against the liberties of Ireland been committed as was now meditated by the Whigs. And these were their friends! This the reward for helping them to pass Reform! "Do not be alarmed about my health," O'Connell wrote to Edward Dwyer. "The atrocious attempt to extinguish public liberty with which Ireland is menaced has made me young again. . . . Talk of a union, indeed, between the two countries, after presuming to attempt to outlaw the inhabitants of one great portion of the empire!" So intense was his indignation that, even before the Bill had been discussed in the Upper House, he seized the opportunity which a motion for supply afforded him to warn Government against the perilous course upon which they were entering. What, he asked, was the reason for a measure of such exceptional severity? Was a whole country to be outlawed on the mere *ipse dixit* of a minister, without further inquiry? People charged him with agitating the repeal of the Union. But ministers were doing more than he was to further that object. For himself, he would say, though the admission might be turned against him in Ireland, that he had ever been, and still was, most attached to a British connection. He was a Repealer; but he would prefer to see justice done to his countrymen by Parliament than by a local legislature; and if he thought that the machinery of the present Government would

work well for Ireland, there never lived a man more ready to facilitate its movements than himself. The only reason he had for being a Repealer was the injustice of the Government towards his country, and the fact that that Government must be unjust so long as it lacked proper and impartial information. There was disorder in Ireland; outrages had occurred. But was a whole country to be put under martial law for the crimes of a few? The only persons Government had to fear — the only persons he feared—were the Whiteboys. They, and they alone, opposed resistance to the execution of the laws, and it was against them alone, and not against the innocent that severe measures should be directed. It was a calumny — a deep, false, and foul calumny — to assert that political agitation was in any way connected with predial outrage. But the truth was, ministers had an ulterior purpose to serve in asking for these exceptional powers. Their real reason was to enforce the payment of tithes. Should the Act pass, let any parish resist the payment of tithes, and let a cornstack or a haystack be burned in that parish by any — the merest — accident, and it would be seen to what the accident was attributed. Woe then to such a parish and woe to the man in it that dared to refuse tithes. For them there would be no other mercy than the tender pity of dragoons and marines. He besought the Reformers of England not to condemn Ireland unheard. He solicited inquiry; and should the result be unfavourable, should Englishmen with a full knowledge of the facts, think that Ireland ought to

be governed by such measures as those proposed, he would be the first to say — "Let Ireland submit."

But his appeal was made in vain. Less than a week sufficed to see the Bill through the House of Lords. Its fortunes in the Commons were more chequered, but the result was the same. On 27th February Lord Althorp explained its provisions in a speech characterised by Lord John Russell as "tame and ineffective." A motion to postpone its introduction for a fortnight seemed likely to be carried. The credit of the Irish government, the fate of the ministry, hung in the balance. Both were saved by Stanley. His speech on that occasion is still remembered as one of the greatest triumphs ever won in a popular assembly by the power of oratory. But it was won by equivocal methods — by arts which, however suitable to a rhetorician, were unworthy of a statesman. Any other man but O'Connell would have been overwhelmed by the fierce denunciation, the indignant scorn, the scathing irony, with which he was assailed. But he was fighting for the elementary liberties of his country, and the attack passed harmlessly over him.

"I care not," he replied, "for personal attacks. If I had not the consolation of knowing that my intentions are pure and disinterested, and that I am anxious only for peace, good order and freedom — if I had not the comfort of my own feelings in this respect — if my conscience did not approve, not of every expression, perhaps, but of my motives — if I did not feel that my motives are only the warmest wishes for the increase of human happiness and liberty, wherever the slave is

oppressed, or the oppressor can be found—if I had not these things to console me, I might feel the attacks that have been made upon me."

But the wrongs of his country had been mixed up with the attacks on him. Really, it was pitiable to see the representatives of the great and generous people of England legislating against a single individual. Why not save themselves that trouble? Why not banish him for a year and a half? He would consent to it. They should banish him on condition that they would not oppress his country. Such, however, was the difficult position in which he was placed, that he could not advise without being said to threaten; he could not prophesy without being taunted with provoking what he prophesied. He would not advise; he would not prophesy; he would, however, say that it was not enough to show that murders were being committed in Ireland to justify the suppression of the constitution. Ministers must show that the measure they proposed would cure the evils of which they complained. They could not show it. Coercion might produce temporary tranquillity, but it would be followed by greater rancour. It would produce the tranquillity of the grave—a deathlike silence, and a dreary repose; but not peace—not quiet—not confidence. Political agitation had nothing whatever to do with predial outrages. He begged them to consider the following facts. In 1824 the Catholic Association was established. The number of persons charged with treasonable offences was, in 1823, 106; in 1824,

1; in 1825, 1; in 1826, 1; in 1827, none; in 1828, none; in 1829, none. These were years of political agitation; offences with violence decreased as political agitation spread. In 1822 there were 499 persons accused of seditious practices; in 1823, 424; in 1824, 121; in 1825, 17; in 1827, 4; and whereas, for robbing of arms 64 men were arraigned in 1822, in 1823 there were only 7. How could they then say that predial and political agitation were concurrent? Ireland was suffering; she was in distress, she was a-hungry, and for bread they offered her a stone — they gave her, instead of remedial measures, an Act which deprived Irishmen of trial by jury, which substituted court-martial, which deprived them of the Habeas Corpus Act, and in a word, imposed on each man the necessity of proving himself innocent. Did they think that such measures would put an end to the agitation for the repeal of the Union? The present generation might perish; coercion might destroy the existing population; but the indignant soul of Ireland could not be annihilated.

"There was a time when a ray of hope dawned upon that country. It was when the present Parliament first assembled. We saw this Reformed House of Commons congregated. We knew that every man here had a constituency; we knew that the people of England were represented here; we knew that the public voice not only would influence your decisions, but command your votes; we hoped that you would afford us redress of our grievances: and you give us an Act of despotism!"

Never did O'Connell appear to greater advantage in the House of Commons; never more unapproachable in his lonely grandeur, than he did on this occasion. Once before, when defending Magee, once again, when addressing Ireland from the Hill of Tara, did he impress men with his greatness. But never again did he occupy the position he did on this occasion in the House of Commons. Night after night saw him at his post, in the House, in Committee, ever watchful, ever on his guard, ever ready to take advantage of the slightest slip on the part of the enemy. The versatility with which he exchanged the character of an orator for that of a plodding, keen-scented, practical lawyer, was marvellous. No one who saw him in Committee quietly criticising now this now that passage, courteously suggesting some slight emendation in the wording of it, which would have gone far to emasculate the Bill, politely answering the most trivial questions, could have imagined that it was the same man who, a few hours previously, had been defying the oppressors of his country——

"Make your bondmen tremble.
Must I observe you? Must I stand and crouch
Under your testy humour? By the gods!
You shall digest the venom of your spleen
Tho' it do split you."

Stanley, in particular, found him a formidable opponent. No sooner was he driven from one position than he entrenched himself in another — fighting the Bill clause by clause, paragraph by paragraph,

almost word by word. A hostile House, a powerful press, Whiteboys and Whitefeet, more dangerous than either, were arrayed against him. Single-handed he fought them all, asking no assistance, and getting none. Even his enemies could not conceal their admiration of him as they realised the force of Cobbett's epithet — "the member for Ireland." Not his eloquence, not the sometimes tawdry rags of rhetoric in which he wrapped his thoughts, was it that made him great, and forced men against their wills to listen to him, but his earnestness. It was the man, not his words, that held them. One thought alone possessed him. He knew nothing, cared for nothing, but Ireland, and, looking on him, men seemed to be gazing on Ireland personified. Again and again the lines recurred to him:

> "Oh, Erin! Shall it e'er be mine
> To right thy wrongs in battle line,
> To raise my victor head, and see,
> Thy hills, thy dales, thy people free?
> That glance of bliss is all I crave
> Between my labours and the grave."

And the words possessed a deeper significance for him than for the poet who wrote them. Men maligned him in his life-time; they criticised him after his death; but of his love for Ireland, his patriotism, there is no question. He may have been mistaken in the policy he advocated; he was intemperate and brutal in his language to those who opposed him; but he was so because he regarded them as the enemies of his country, and his devotion to the land

of his birth pleads for him and excuses him. Of him it could be said——

> "His heart s his mouth.
> What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent ;
> And, being angry, does forget that ever
> He heard the name of death."

But his opposition, if it retarded the Bill, could not prevent it becoming law early in April. One or two concessions were all he could wring from Government, and Ireland, having been taught to fear, was now, according to rule, in a fit position to have kindness administered to her. On 11th March, Althorp introduced his Church Temporalties Bill, of which he had given a sketch at the beginning of the session ; but before it had been proceeded with it was discovered that all the formalities connected with it had not been observed. It had, accordingly, to be withdrawn, and it was only on the first of April that Althorp was in a position to submit it to the House. Its progress was incredibly slow. People had time to forget that it was, in effect, the price of the Coercion Act, and when Stanley, on 21st June, moved to omit the clause appropriating the revenues of the suppressed bishoprics to purposes thought fit by Parliament, the House supported him.

The abandonment of the appropriation principle deprived the measure of all that gave it vitality, and O'Connell at once repudiated it on behalf of Ireland. Before, however, the Bill became law, the situation, as regarded Ireland, had considerably improved, rendering it, in O'Connell's opinion, desirable to retain the

Whigs in office. First and foremost, Stanley had been promoted to the Colonial office. His successor, overlooking Sir John Cam Hobhouse, who only held office a week or two, was Edward John Littleton, afterwards Lord Hatherton. The Church Temporalities Bill, without satisfying Ireland, had done much to weaken the ministry in England. During June and July the situation was extremely critical; everyone thought that the Grey administration was tottering to its fall. Despite his dissatisfaction with the Whigs, O'Connell had no desire to see the Tories in power, and on several occasions exerted himself conspicuously on behalf of the former. His exertions were not unrewarded, and though no actual promises were held out by Littleton he was given to believe that the press prosecutions, instituted by Stanley, would be dropped, that his plan of corporate reform would meet with support, and that an effort would be made in the direction of the total abolition of tithes. Satisfied with this result, he was much annoyed to learn that his policy was strongly disapproved of in Ireland, and that he was being charged with a desire to postpone Repeal.

The fact was, his admission, during the Coercion debate, that he would prefer to see justice done to Ireland by the Imperial Parliament rather than by a domestic legislature, had, as he predicted it probably would, done him considerable harm.

"I am bound in candour to tell you," he wrote to Fitzpatrick on 13th June, "that the advice of my friends in Dublin would not induce *me* to consent to bring it

[Repeal] on this session, because I know that any rational discussion upon it is impossible in this advanced and complicated state of the public business. We should have been either deprived of a House by members going away, or we should be treated with contempt and ridicule by men who are now thinking of nothing else save escaping from London and getting rid of the session."

A day or two afterwards there was a meeting in St. Audeon's parish, Dublin, at which a resolution was passed virtually censuring him for his inactivity in regard to Repeal.

"I am sorry," he wrote when he heard of it, "to find that eighteen members of St. Audeon's parish should have given my enemies such a triumph over me. . . . Well! well! well! How idle it is for every man to expect to be treated with fairness? To insinuate that *I* interpose a delay to carrying the Repeal!"

But the mischief did not stop here. The subject was taken up by the *Freeman's Journal* in Ireland, and by Feargus O'Connor in London. Feargus O'Connor, of Chartist celebrity, the scatter-brained son of a still madder father, had succeeded, contrary to all expectation, in getting himself returned M. P. for county Cork at the last general election. The victory seemed to have turned the little brains he possessed, and, conceiving that an opportunity now presented itself of substituting himself for O'Connell as leader of the Irish party, he suddenly announced his determination of moving the Repeal of the Union on 16th July. Nothing could alter his resolution, and O'Connell, feeling that the situation was critical, summoned a meeting of his "tail." Opinion was

divided, and it was only by pledging himself to bring the question before Parliament early in the next session that he managed to stave off the danger of a premature debate.

Naturally enough, Feargus got plenty of applause for his resolute conduct — some of it sincere, some of it for the express purpose of setting the Irish members by the ear. The press joined in. The London papers had long "burked" O'Connell's speeches; they now began to misrepresent him. It was not the first time he had complained of being improperly reported. In Ireland the reporters had excused themselves on the ground that he spoke too rapidly and too long. The reporters of the House of Commons made no excuse. To O'Connell's charge of "wilful misrepresentation" they replied by refusing to report him at all. Their power was very great; they boasted of having put down a Tierney and a Windham, and another man would have hesitated before entering into the lists with them. But O'Connell had hit upon a plan to make them listen to reason. "If the *Times* does not report me, it shall not report anybody else," he wrote to Fitzpatrick. On 26th July he brought the matter before the House, and, treating their refusal to report him as a breach of privilege, he obtained an order for the proprietor and printer of the *Times* to attend at the bar of the House. His speech in application for the order was not reported, and three days later he moved that the order for the day for their attendance at the bar be read. He lost his motion; the reporters smiled at his defeat. But he

had still his trump card to play. Hardly had the Speaker taken the chair than he said, "I think, Sir, I see strangers in the gallery." A minute or two afterwards not a stranger, not a reporter, was to be seen in the House. Next morning people scanned the papers anxiously to see what had taken place. Not a line, not a word, of what had happened was to be found in them. The victory was won; the day following the reporters surrendered.

Before the session came to an end, O'Connell returned with his family to Ireland. His health, notwithstanding the strain placed upon it of almost seven months' close and unremitting labour, had never, he declared, been better; but he needed rest, and longed for the fresh sea breezes of Darrynane. Replying to an invitation to a banquet at Cork, that reached him shortly after his return, he begged his friends to postpone for a time the honour they wished to show him.

"I want," he wrote, "the calm and quiet of my loved native hills — the bracing air, purified as it comes over 'the world of waters,' the cheerful exercise, the majestic scenery, of these awful mountains, whose wildest and most romantic glens are awakened by the enlivening cry of my merry beagles, whose deep notes, multiplied one million times by the echoes, speak to my senses as if it were the voice of magic powers commingling with the eternal roar of the mighty Atlantic, that breaks and foams with impotent rage at the foot of our stupendous cliffs."

Above all, he wanted time to prepare himself for

the great Repeal effort he had promised to make in the following session, and he had hardly been a week at Darrynane before he instructed Fitzpatrick to send him every book on Irish history that he could lay his hands on. "You cannot," he wrote, "send me down too much Irish history." He had already, in a "Letter to the People of Ireland," on the first of July, expounded his plan of action to procure as many petitions as possible for the repeal of the Union, to conciliate Protestant opinion in Ireland, and to prepare the popular mind in England and Scotland for the discussion of the question, by showing them that Repeal did not mean separation, but directly the reverse; "my political creed being, that the best possible political revolution is not worth one single drop of human blood." Brave words! But the burden of the Coercion Act, and the practical suspension of the agitation since the general election, had completely damped the popular enthusiasm for Repeal. O'Connell's own attitude, too, was equivocal; rumour persistently ascribed to him an intention of joining the ministry, and though he gave it an unqualified denial, people did not believe him to be in earnest. The indifference of the public reacted on him.

"May not," he wrote in confidence to Fitzpatrick, Repeal be dispensed with, if we get beneficial measures without it? This is a serious question, and one upon which good men may well differ; but it is my duty to make up my mind upon it, and I have made up my mind accordingly — that there can be no safety, no

permanent prosperity in Ireland, without a repeal of the Union."

Towards the latter end of September, Lord Anglesey, exhausted with his vain efforts to recover his popularity, surrendered the reins of government to the Marquis of Wellesley, who thus became, for the second time, Viceroy of Ireland. O'Connell improved the occasion by administering a final kick to the departing governor, and by advising his countrymen to confide in the good intentions of his successor. The advice was a feeble substitute for the expected summons to rally round the standard of Repeal. But O'Connell, truth to say, was not in a fighting humour. He was drifting, he knew not exactly whither; hoping he knew not exactly for what—one day sanguine, the next despondent. "There is a lull in politics just now," he wrote to Fitzpatrick on 20th September, "but the land breeze will soon spring up, and we shall have a stiff gale before we are much older. I pause to obtain Protestant aid." Weeks passed away without any sign of the weather freshening. The calm told on O'Connell's nerves. "I am perhaps," he wrote on 31st October, "out of spirits, unjustly or without cause, but I feel a sense of desertion of me, when I ought not. . . . What alarms me principally is that, although I see some newspaper puffs, I do not see anywhere, save in Cork, the organisation which *could* promise success." Worse followed. He had been led to believe that the press prosecutions instituted by Stanley would be abandoned by Littleton. His belief proved unfounded. In November, Richard Barrett, editor of the *Pilot*,

was tried in Dublin for publishing a letter of O'Connell's, alleged to be libellous. O'Connell, as in honour bound, undertook his defence. It was some relief to vent his indignation against "the vile cozening Whigs" in a speech infinitely more libellous than that complained of. But the jury, wholly Tory and Orange in sentiment, while they relished his fierce tirade against their political opponents, were alive to their own interests, and convicted Barrett, with hardly the ceremony of a consultation.

Never, perhaps, had O'Connell passed a more miserable Christmas; but the weary recess came at last to an end, and the first day of the new session found him in his accustomed seat in St. Stephen's. The Speech from the Throne called attention to and deprecated, "with feelings of deep regret and just indignation, the continuance of attempts to excite the people of Ireland to demand a repeal of the legislative union." O'Connell moved the omission of the obnoxious paragraph, but was defeated by 189 to 23 votes. It was a bad omen for the success of the Repeal debate, to which he had promised to treat the House later on in the session. "I find the House of Commons," he wrote on 7th February, "more intolerant of Ireland than it was last session — hating us more — more disposed to do us mischief. It is a disposition which will evince itself in some overt acts before this session is over." The situation was, in fact, disheartening. The thought of the speech he had to make weighed upon him like a nightmare. During the recess he had been studying Irish history, but only to find that the more he studied it the less

he knew about it. "The first display in Parliament on the Repeal question," he had written on 11th October, "is one which, to do it justice, would require months of seclusion." As the fatal day, the 22nd of April, approached, his nervousness grew upon him. "I feel lonely," he wrote to Fitzpatrick. "I can make but little—miserably little of my subject. Would to God it were in abler hands." At the beginning of April he took a week's holiday on the south coast, visiting Canterbury cathedral, and finding some spiritual consolation in contemplating the spot where Thomas à Becket was murdered. But the thought of his speech preyed upon him night and day. Had it been possible, he would gladly have withdrawn from his undertaking; but he was pledged to bring the subject before Parliament, and withdrawal, he knew well, would be more fatal than defeat.

"I never," he wrote on 9th April, "felt half *so nervous* about anything as I do about my Repeal effort. It will be my worst. I sink beneath the load. My materials are confused, and totally without arrangement. . . . It is quite true, I have often desponded before a public exertion and afterwards succeeded, but this cannot now be the case. I feel, for the first time *overpowered*."

His fears proved not altogether groundless, though the fault was more in his subject than in himself. Rising to move the appointment of a committee to inquire into and report on, the means by which the abolition of the Parliament of Ireland was effected,

on the effects of that measure on Ireland, and on the probable consequences of continuing the legislative union, he spoke for rather over five hours. It was a great effort, but hardly to be called a great speech. He set himself to prove three points: first, that England had no right of conquest, nor any title to the subjugation of Ireland; second, that no Parliament, deriving its power of legislation from the people, had the right to annihilate itself; and third, that Ireland had declined in prosperity since, and because of, the Union. His speech thus possessed a threefold aspect — an historical, a constitutional, and a financial. For the historical argument, the less said about it the better; it was deadly dull and worthless; for the constitutional, he made one telling quotation from Locke, which, had the Union been a matter of merely academic discussion, would, in itself, have settled the question; in his financial argument, he stood on firmer ground, but his figures were badly arranged, and, worse than all, they were answerable. Had he devoted his attention more to this aspect of the question, and less to the historical, he would undoubtedly have produced a greater effect, have bored his audience less, and have rendered the task of Spring Rice, who, having made a special study of the relations between the two kingdoms, was put up to answer him, a much more difficult one. This, he himself admitted. The question, he explained to Fitzpatrick, "turns upon the single fact, whether or not Ireland has prospered by or since the Union. Rice *figures* Ireland into prosperity. Is Ireland prosperous? Whoever thinks not, refutes Rice's

entire case and that of the Unionists. Whoever says 'Yes' gives Rice the victory."

From O'Connell's point of view, this is no doubt quite true. Nevertheless, it may perhaps be permitted to dissent from the opinion that the case for the Union hinges on the prosperity or non-prosperity of Ireland. The Union, it may at once be said, is not a topic for academic discussion. It may be granted that England has no claim to hold Ireland by right of conquest, though it is difficult to understand what, in the face of actual facts, that assertion exactly means; it may be allowed that no legislature has the power to annihilate itself; it may even be admitted that Ireland has not prospered under the Union; and yet the Union remains a solid and stubborn fact. Why? Simply because it is to England's interest to maintain it. Stripped of all irrelevant, including not a little hypocritical, matter, the Union was carried by force, and has ever since been so maintained. It is not a question of justice or injustice, of prosperity or the reverse, but of simple utility. "Political problems," said Burke, "do not primarily concern truth or falsehood. What in the result is likely to produce evil, is politically false; that which is productive of good, politically true." The Union was Pitt's attempt to solve a problem which in his opinion involved, not only the safety, but the very existence of the British Empire; and it is no paradox to say that if any single individual was responsible for it, that individual was Theobald Wolfe Tone. This was entirely Peel's view of the subject, when, in the present debate, he insisted that Repeal was not

merely a question between England and Ireland, nor between Great Britain and Europe, but between the British Empire and the world. Whether the Union was not a political blunder of the first magnitude is another matter. But if it is ever to be repealed, it must be shown to be a blunder to Englishmen. The moment that England is convinced that it is to her interest to restore to Ireland her domestic legislature, that moment the Union will stand repealed. Ireland never had anything to do with the making of it, and will have nothing to do with the unmaking of it, except in so far as she may have the power of creating the necessity for it. When O'Connell urged the influx of Irish cheap labour into the English market as a motive for repealing the Union, men listened to him; when he spoke of justice and mercy, they turned a deaf ear to him and rejected his motion for inquiry by 523 to 38.

Still, the debate was not wholly unproductive of good. Many, even while they voted for the retention of the Union, had not listened altogether unmoved to the recital of Ireland's wrongs, and a strong feeling sprang up of a desire to treat her with greater leniency and consideration. The change of sentiment did not escape O'Connell. "I repeat," he wrote to Fitzpatrick, "we Repealers have made great *moral* way in the opinion of the House." The consequences were important. Immediately the Repeal debate was over, Littleton introduced a Bill for the commutation of tithe into a land tax. The Bill naturally failed to satisfy O'Connell, who called it a "most excellent humbug"; but it was equally

unsatisfactory, though for different reasons, to Stanley. Curiosity was on tiptoe to know how far ministers were in agreement upon it, and Sheil pointedly asked them whether they were prepared to maintain or abandon the Church Establishment. Stanley replied ambiguously; but Lord John Russell, casting discretion to the wind, acknowledged that, having resisted Repeal on the ground that Parliament was ready to attend to the just complaints of the people of Ireland, he could not lightly regard the obligation thereby contracted. "Johnny has upset the coach," laconically remarked Stanley to Sir James Graham; if not indeed quite, he let it be seen that dissensions existed in the Cabinet, and made an opening for the thin end of the wedge which was to lead to its disruption.

Seeing how matters were going, O'Connell, in order not to give any chance for a joint attack on Ireland, commanded an absolute suspension of the Repeal agitation. His friends, he wrote, were not to suppose that he had in any way altered his mind upon the necessity of Repeal; but the situation was critical, and he was endeavouring to make the most of it by using "the Repeal *in terrorem* merely until it is wise and necessary to recommence the agitation," his object being to "seek for practical benefits for Ireland in a tone and temper beyond reproach," and not to afford ministers the slightest excuse to renew the Coercion Act, which would expire with the session. The course of events favoured his project. On 27th May, a motion was made to pledge the House to the appropriation of surplus

Church property in Ireland to secular purposes. The motion placed Government in an awkward dilemma and, seeing no way out of the difficulty without resigning, Stanley, Graham, the Duke of Richmond, and Lord Ripon withdrew from the ministry. A short adjournment took place, in order to afford time to supply their places, and then the business of the session recommenced. The main question was the Tithe Bill. Could O'Connell, it was asked, be induced to withdraw his opposition to it? Littleton thought it possible to manage him. He was known to be anxious not to have the Coercion Act renewed, and Wellesley, though not prepared to retract his opinion entirely as to the necessity for its renewal, was willing to meet his colleague's wishes by accepting it *minus* its political clauses.

Believing that he had thus smoothed the way for an understanding, Littleton, with the assent of Althorp, but without the knowledge of Grey, opened up negotiations with O'Connell. He found him not merely willing to treat, but ready to assist Government. Privately, he was more than satisfied.

"I have great pleasure," he wrote confidentially to Fitzpatrick on 24th June, "in telling you that no part of the Coercion Bill is to be renewed but that which relates to 'Predial Agitation,' and even from that everything unconstitutional is to be omitted. We must, therefore, soon bethink ourselves of returning to Dublin, and of arranging for political agitation. But this must not appear in *any* newspaper."

What, then, was his surprise, to hear ten days later from Littleton that, owing to the opposition of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet had resolved to renew the Coercion Act in all its terrors. Thinking himself to have been purposely misled, he told Littleton that nothing remained for him but to resign. This, unfortunately for his credit, Littleton, trusting to the chapter of accidents, did not do, and the Cabinet, supporting Grey, in his resolution, O'Connell made the whole transaction public. The result was the resignation of Earl Grey, and the reconstruction of the administration under Lord Melbourne, with Lord Duncannon as Home Secretary, and Wellesley and Littleton retaining their respective posts in Ireland.

O'Connell was jubilant at the result.

"We are," he wrote, "on the way from half Whig, half Tory government, to one half Radical, half Whig, without the slightest admixture of Toryism. The moment such a Ministry is formed there will be a famous *turning off* in Ireland. The Attorney-General (Blackburne) will certainly be dismissed, and the entire Orange clique will go with him."

Shorn of its political clauses, the Coercion Bill passed its third reading on 26th July; but the Tithe Bill, after passing safely through the Commons, was rejected by the Lords on 11th August. Two days previously, O'Connell had left London for Ireland, quicter in his mind, though unable to secure the removal of Blackburne, than he had been for a long time. Two months passed away: for O'Connell

two months of delightful rest and recreation at Darrynane, but otherwise of deep disappointment. Of the "turning off," which he had so confidently expected under the new régime, there had been no sign; on the contrary, it seemed as if the Whigs were determined, by every means in their power, to strengthen the hands of the Orange party.

"You are now," he wrote indignantly to Lord Duncannon on 11th October, "three months in office, and you have done nothing for Ireland; you have not in any, even the slightest degree, altered the old system. The people are as ground down by Orange functionaries as ever they were in the most palmy days of Toryism."

When the news came, a month later, that the King, taking advantage of the removal of Althorp to the Upper House in consequence of the death of his father, Earl Spencer, had dismissed Melbourne and called upon Peel to construct a Tory administration, he exclaimed, "It is well that we are rid of the humbuggers. *Nous verrons.* I am convinced that all will be for the better." But second thoughts are proverbially wiser, and at the general election in January, 1835, he rendered what assistance he could to promote the success of the Whigs.

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CHAPTER XIII.

IRELAND UNDER THOMAS DRUMMOND.

1835–1840.

IN the new Parliament, which met for the first time on 19th February, 1835, neither Whigs nor Tories had a decided majority; the balance of power lay with O'Connell and his Repeal contingent. This circumstance, and the fact that O'Connell's sympathies inclined him towards the Whigs, rendered a more formal understanding between them not only possible, but, in the opinion of both, desirable. The result was what is known as the "Lichfield House Compact." It is not worth while quarrelling with the name, though "compact," as Lord John Russell said, "it was none; but an alliance on honourable terms of mutual co-operation." The terms of the agreement were of the simplest possible. O'Connell offered his assistance to put the Whigs in power, and to maintain them there on condition that they would govern Ireland wisely and beneficently. For himself he asked nothing.

It was not long before the fruits of the alliance were visible. On 8th April Peel, having been de-

feated on the question of appropriating the surplus property of the Church of Ireland to secular uses, resigned office, thereby obliging the King, much against his will, to call on Melbourne to construct an administration. In the distribution of posts that followed Lord Mulgrave was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with Lord Morpeth as his Chief Secretary. The case of O'Connell presented some difficulty. It was felt that if possible he ought to be provided for. He expressed his willingness to accept the Attorney Generalship, if only to show his inveterate enemies, the Orangemen, that the office might be impartially executed; but the King's prejudices interposed an insuperable obstacle, and the Mastership of the Rolls, which was offered to him, he declined. He was quite content to be excluded.

"I have," he wrote to Fitzpatrick on 14th April, "been most highly flattered and thanked, etc., etc., for my conduct, and yet it would be not only folly, but guilt, in me to accept any office until *I have seen* how the new Ministry works. My policy is obvious — to keep what control I possibly can *over* the new government, instead of being under its control. I will also be more useful by influencing the appointment of others than by submitting to take an appointment myself."

He was right. Relieved by the self-denying ordinance he had placed on himself, ministers showed extra willingness to listen to his advice. Louis Perrin, a highly respected Protestant barrister, whose claims he had constantly urged, was made Attorney General; Michael O'Loghlen, who next to himself

had the highest reputation and largest practice among Catholic lawyers, was appointed Solicitor General; and last, but not least, Thomas Drummond was appointed Under Secretary at the Castle. When the arrangements were completed, O'Connell with his contingent passed over from the opposition to the ministerial side of the House. Thus was the "compact," or "alliance," or understanding, or whatever it might be called, begun at Lichfield House, formally and openly ratified.

Paying a hurried visit to Dublin, O'Connell explained his position in a "Letter to the People of Ireland."

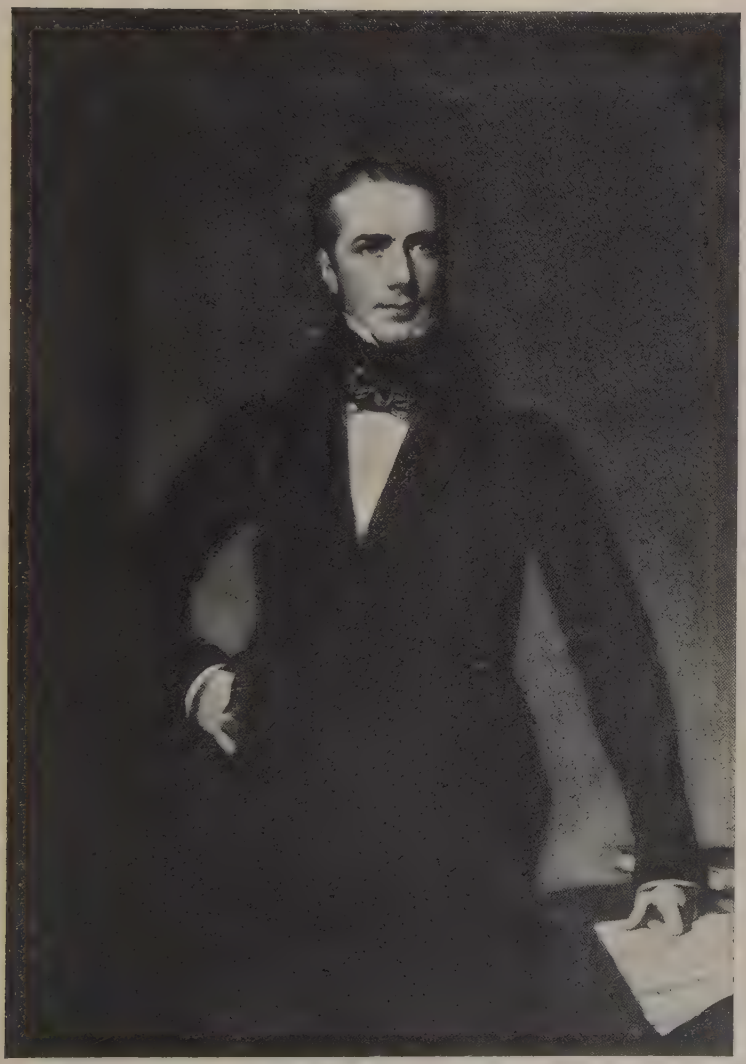
"I come now," he wrote, "before the people to avow myself the determined supporter of the Administration. To the King's Ministers I have tendered my unbought, unpurchasable, unconditional support. I have neither made terms nor stipulations with them. It suffices for me that their political principles are all identified with the cause of good government and of justice to the loved land of my birth. . . . It is under this impression that I have tendered my support. It is simply and singly because I deem them the friends of Ireland that they command my services, such as they are. . . . But, as I have not deemed it necessary or wise to make stipulations with the present Ministry, I may, and I ought to, be asked what benefits I expect to anticipate for Ireland from the King's present Ministers. . . . The country will cease to be governed by its unrelenting enemies. The Ministers will necessarily displace their own and the people's enemies, and employ the friends of the people and their own. . . . The administration of justice

in Ireland will be purified. The selection to judicial offices of political partisans will never more be heard of; men who have proved their integrity and independence by political honesty in times when it was a crime to dare to be liberal will be the fit objects of the selection of the Ministry; and the waters of justice will no longer be poured through mephitic channels, destructive of life and property, but will flow in pure sources, diffusing salubrity and gladness over the land."

The Melbourne administration lasted five years, and for almost the whole of that period it commanded the support, if not always the praise, of O'Connell. It solved the tithe difficulty, reformed the municipal corporations, and gave Ireland a poor law. But it was not so much in its legislative, as in its administrative capacity, that it was most successful. For the first time since the Union, Ireland enjoyed a government that was really entitled to be called popular. The streams of justice for once flowed in pure sources. For once the whole people went to Court. And if the name of Thomas Drummond, who, *nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum*, literally killed himself in trying to serve her, is to-day one of the most beloved and revered in Ireland, it ought not to be forgotten that it is to O'Connell, in the first place, that thanks are due for rendering such a government as that of Drummond's possible. People still talk of his one great Emancipation success being balanced by his great Repeal failure. His contemporaries blamed him for his suspension of the Repeal agitation. But it cannot too often be repeated that O'Connell's great object was,

not Repeal but good government. That he got from the Mulgrave-Drummond administration, and success justified his experiment. Had Ireland been blessed with a few more Thomas Drummonds in the early decades of the century, there would never have been any question of Repeal at all, and O'Connell would have been known merely as a great lawyer whose abilities had raised him to the highest legal office in his native land. This the Orangemen of his own day knew perfectly well, and if Drummond was execrated by them, it was O'Connell that had to bear the brunt of their wrath. The wonder is that they did not succeed in driving him out of public life.

To retrace our steps slightly. At the general election in January, 1835, O'Connell had been returned for Dublin with a considerably diminished majority. There was good reason to believe that many who had voted for him were disqualified by non-payment of rates, and a petition was at once lodged against him, the costs of which are said to have been largely defrayed by the Carlton Club. The petition was not decided till May in the following year, when O'Connell and his colleague, Ruthven, were unseated. Two votes, he bitterly remarked, would have made all the difference. The petition was one of the most expensive on record, and more than once, during its progress, O'Connell thought that he would have to go the length of mortgaging Darrynane. The suspense was terrible, and the decision, though bitterly unpleasant to his feelings, was a relief.



THOMAS DRUMMOND.

AFTER PICKERSGILL BY H. COUSINS.

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"It has, indeed," he wrote to Fitzpatrick on 13th May, "been an awful load. You are aware that the Dublin part of the business cost me £650 or thereabouts, exclusive of the sum subscribed in that town. I did not get one shilling assistance for the expenses in London, of the weight of which you may judge when I tell you I had to pay counsel for 80 days, which you may estimate at the lowest at £75 per day; that is, in fees to counsel £6000; add to that my expenses in Dublin, and other expenses here, and you will find me at the loss of full £8000 at the lowest calculation. It has cost the opposite party four, or perhaps five times that sum; but what comfort is that to me! Recollect that I have four other petitions in my family to defend, and five contested elections. The Youghal committee alone cost me more than £2000. This conspiracy against me is, therefore, nearly complete. . . . It is a compliment the Orange faction pay to my utility. . . . There is nothing fictitious in the fury with which I am pursued and persecuted."

Driven from Dublin, he took refuge in Kilkenny, where a vacancy had been created for him. Day by day the Tory press of England and Ireland followed him with unrelenting hatred, pouring scorn on the Ministry that could stoop so low as to seek his co-operation. Nor were they altogether unsuccessful in inflaming the public mind against him. When Lord Melbourne announced in the House of Lords that he had succeeded in forming a ministry, Lord Alvanley, who had some reputation for being a wag, asked him with a sneer to explain the terms on which he had procured O'Connell's assistance. Melbourne replied with dignity that he had made no

terms whatever with Mr. O'Connell. This was too much for Tory credulity, and in the House of Commons Colonel Sibthorp begged leave to doubt whether Mr. O'Connell "had not been a prompter and adviser in the things that had taken place." In replying, O'Connell contrasted "the good temper and politeness of Colonel Sibthorp" with the "different style" used by a "bloated buffoon" in another place. Naturally, Alvanley resented being called a "bloated buffoon"; but before he could make up his mind to demand satisfaction for the insult, O'Connell had left London. His letter, enclosed in one from his "friend," the Hon. Dawson Damer, reached its destination a week after it had been written. "This bangs Banagher!" was O'Connell's exclamation on reading it. Fancy a letter being sent by one person in Clifden to another person in London, to be transmitted to a third person in Dublin, to fight a duel! A long shot truly! For the rest, though inclined to treat the matter as a huge joke, he declared he had half a mind to bring it before the House of Commons, as a breach of privilege. Alvanley, in a paroxysm of rage, thereupon wrote to the managers of Brooks's, requesting them to expel O'Connell. This they very properly declined to do; but, the letter being public property, O'Connell's son Morgan took up the cudgels in his father's behalf. Alvanley agreed to accept him as his substitute, and the two, with their seconds, met on Wimbledon Common. There was no one on the ground but an old woman and a Methodist clergyman, who, in the exercise of his office, besought

Alvanley to think of his soul. "Yes," replied he, "but my body is now in the greatest danger." Three shots were fired, and the parties separated. On returning to town, Alvanley handed his cabman gold. "This is a great deal for only taking your lordship to Wimbledon," said he. "It 's not for taking me there, but for bringing me back," replied his lordship. The affair furnished the town with some amusement, and Alvanley became a celebrated character.

"The Solon of statesmen, the Falstaff of wits,
As even O'Connell in candour admits:
He's the pride of the Park, of the Club, the saloon,
For the wag of all wags is the "Bloated Buffoon."

Following hard on his quarrel with Alvanley came one with Benjamin Disraeli, afterwards Lord Beaconsfield. Disraeli had solicited O'Connell's assistance in 1831, when contesting the borough of Wycombe in the radical interest. Nevertheless, he failed to get elected, and shortly afterwards going over to the Tories, spoke of O'Connell at Taunton as an "incendiary" and "traitor." O'Connell addressing the "Dublin Franchise Union," in May, paid him out in his own coin. Disraeli, he declared, was a disgrace to his species — his life was a living lie. His name showed that he was by descent a Jew. His father became a convert. He was the better for that in the present world, and he, O'Connell, hoped he would be the better for it in the world to come. There was a habit of underrating that great and oppressed nation — the Jews. They were

cruelly persecuted by persons calling themselves Christians; but no person ever yet was a Christian who persecuted. It would not, therefore, be supposed that when he spoke of Disraeli as the descendant of a Jew he meant to tarnish him on that account. The Jews were once the chosen people of God. But there were miscreants amongst them, even then, and it was surely from one of these that Disraeli was descended. He possessed just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died upon the cross, and with the impression that Disraeli was his descendant, he forgave the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the cross. The severity of the rebuke pierced even Disraeli's cynicism, and, quivering with rage, he addressed a letter to Morgan O'Connell, modestly requesting him "to resume his vicarious duties of yielding satisfaction for the insults which his father had too long lavished with impunity upon his political opponents." When Morgan flatly refused to comply with his insolent request, Disraeli published an open letter "to Daniel O'Connell," which he enclosed in another to Morgan. "Now, Sir," he wrote, "it is my hope that I have insulted him — assuredly it was my intention to do so; and I fervently pray that you or some one of his blood may attempt to avenge the inextinguishable hatred with which I shall pursue his existence." This letter Morgan returned with the remark, "The tenor of your last letter is such that it is impossible for me to renew the correspondence."

More damaging, however, to O'Connell's reputation than either of these affairs was his controversy

with Raphael. Alexander Raphael was a Catholic and a sheriff of the City of London. He was anxious to become an M.P., and a vacancy occurring shortly after the general election in the representation of the county of Carlow, O'Connell, believing his principles to be "all we can desire," offered to assist in procuring his return. The terms of the agreement are set forth in the following letter:

"9 Clarges St., 1st June, 1835. My dear Sir,—Your having acceded to the terms proposed to you for the election of the county of Carlow, viz.—you to pay before nomination £1000, and a like sum after being returned, the first to be paid absolutely and entirely for being nominated, the second to be paid only in the event of your having been returned, I hereby undertake to guarantee and save you harmless from any and every other expense whatsoever, whether of agents, carriages, counsel, petition against the return, or of any other description. I make this guarantee in the fullest sense of the honourable engagement that you shall not possibly be required to pay one shilling more in any event or upon any contingency whatsoever. I am, etc. DANIEL O'CONNELL."

Raphael paid his first £1000, and on 21st June was, together with a Mr. Vigors, elected M.P. for Carlow. He ought, of course, then and there to have paid his second £1000; but, getting wind that his return was to be petitioned against, he tried to keep fast hold of his money till the petition was decided in his favour. This O'Connell absolutely, in the interests of the Liberal Club at Carlow, refused to allow, and Raphael paid down his second £1000 under protest. He

was unseated, and O'Connell, to soften his disappointment, offered to use his influence to get him a baronetcy. Raphael declined the courtesy and, smarting under the loss of his money, revenged himself by publishing a letter in the *Times*, on 31st October, setting forth his grievances and charging O'Connell with having appropriated part of the £2000 to his own private purposes. His letter was hailed as a godsend by O'Connell's enemies, who at last thought they saw an opportunity of hounding him out of public life. Never had party passion run higher in England against a single individual than it did at the time against O'Connell. Never did language seem so inadequate to express the hatred and loathing with which he was regarded. Foremost among his detractors was, of course, the *Times*, and even in its own annals perhaps the scurrility of the following lines remains unsurpassed :

> " Scum condensed of Irish bog !
> Ruffian — coward — demagogue !
> Boundless liar — base detractor !
> Nurse of murders, treason's factor !
>
> . . . . . .
>
> " Spout thy filth — effuse thy slime ;
> Slander is in thee no crime.
> Safe from challenge — safe from law,
> What can curb thy callous jaw ?
> Who would sue a convict liar ?
> On a poltroon who would fire ? " etc.

If the best conducted journal in England could find such language worthy of its columns, was it any

wonder if fine gentlemen, like Sir Francis Burdett, could no longer bear to breathe the air contaminated by O'Connell, and, failing to procure his expulsion from Brooks's, resigned in a body? The one man who preserved his temper was O'Connell himself. His reply to Sir Francis Burdett was particularly happy:

"I shall," he wrote, "look out for 'a commodity of good words.' Everything that falls from my pen shall be redolent of the civet. I will carry on the political warfare with *eau de rose*. He who tells base lies shall in future be a 'falsificator'; he who betrays his principles, his party and his country, shall be 'a foolish and fading gentleman'; and he who, with only one virtue and a thousand faults, abandons that virtue, but corrects none of the faults, shall be— I do not at present know exactly what, but I will discover some perfumed word so soft as not to shake the shattered nerves of the most unsound, personally as politically, of the shattered roués of St. James's."

The following session a committee was appointed to investigate the charge brought by Raphael. The committee, while finding the tone of the letter of agreement calculated to excite suspicion, completely exonerated O'Connell, and the verdict of the committee was subsequently confirmed by the House itself. O'Connell in his examination took, however, higher ground. His influence in Ireland was, he admitted, greater than any man ought to possess; the temptation to misuse it was enormous, but it was the result of the injustice with which his country was treated, and would disappear as soon as her

grievances were redressed. The Raphael calumny was only one of many with which he was at this time assailed. To most of them he paid no attention. But a remark of his, touching the demoralising influences of the poor laws in England, having been twisted into an attack on the virtue of English-women, he thought it necessary to explain himself, and also to give a flat denial to a scandal set on foot by *Blackwood* that he had received £1000 from Mr. Potter, of Manchester, to vote for Poulett Thomson's Factory Bill.

In the midst of the fierce warfare of personal abuse, he lost the tender consoling voice and sweet sympathy of his wife. Mrs. O'Connell died on 31st October, 1836. She was buried in the old ruined abbey of Darrynane. Her death left a large gap in O'Connell's life. It is the penalty that most great men pay for their greatness to be practically alone in the world, and, with the exception of Fitzpatrick, possibly the only friend that O'Connell possessed — the only person to whom he could unreservedly unbosom himself — was his wife. With her he buried all that had sweetened life for him — all that had mitigated defeat, that had compensated for sacrifice, that had enhanced victory. Unobtrusive in her life, her death is a factor in the last years of O'Connell's life which his biographer cannot afford to overlook, and explains much that would be otherwise unintelligible: the fits of gloomy despondency with which he was seized, the monastic penances he inflicted upon himself, the almost superhuman energy with which he conducted his Repeal agitation,

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and the awful collapse that followed — the broken heart and the worn-out brain.

To resume our narrative. The Melbourne administration inaugurated its advent to office by submitting to Parliament four measures of considerable importance, viz.: a Bill for reforming municipal corporations in England; a Bill commuting tithe into a land tax, and appropriating the surplus revenues of the Church of Ireland; a Bill for the better regulation of the police force of Dublin; and a Bill for reforming Irish municipal corporations. The influence of Peel secured the passing of the English Corporations Bill; the three other measures were lost, or dropped in consequence of the opposition of the House of Lords. The unscrupulous fashion in which the Peers, relying on the unpopularity of the alliance between the Government and O'Connell, exercised their privileges, elicited of course strong expressions on the part of the Whigs. A cry of "Down with the Lords!" was raised; but although O'Connell, in the early autumn, undertook a campaign in the north of England and Scotland for the express purpose of fomenting the agitation against them, addressing enthusiastic audiences at Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and again in the following January at Liverpool and Birmingham, public opinion was unmistakably on the side of the Lords.

The session of 1836 was practically a repetition of that of the previous year. The Irish Municipal Corporations Bill, after passing the House of Commons, was abandoned, in consequence of radical alterations

made in it by the Lords, and for similar reasons the Tithe Bill was lost. In April, O'Connell addressed large meetings at Nottingham, Hull, and York, and on returning to Ireland, in August, set on foot a "General Association for Ireland," the objects of which were: first, to procure by law a complete municipal reform in Ireland, on as large and efficient a basis as that originally proposed by the Ministry, and secondly, to procure by law such a settlement of the tithe question as should be fully satisfactory to the people of Ireland. The Association was to be supported by an "Irish Rent," on the same basis as the "Catholic Rent," and to be dissolved immediately its objects were attained. It, however, attracted little attention, and having, in the course of twelve months effected nothing, O'Connell took the earliest plausible opportunity to terminate its sickly existence.

Parliament reassembled on 31st January, 1837. The Speech from the Throne suggested, in addition to the annual programme of a Tithe Bill and a Bill for corporate reform, the establishment of some adequate provision for the maintenance of the poor of Ireland. On 11th April the Municipal Bill, having passed its third reading in the House of Commons by a majority of 55, was sent up to the House of Lords. Not venturing to meet it with a direct negative, the Lords this time slightly altered their tactics of obstruction and, by refusing to consider it apart from the other measures prepared by Government, succeeded in bringing legislation to a deadlock. What the consequences of their action might have

been it is impossible with any certainty to predict. As it was, the death of William IV., on 20th June, solved the situation.

O'Connell was full of enthusiasm for the new sovereign, Queen Victoria. Her youth, the dignity and grace of her deportment, the responsibility, not without danger, of her position, drew forth all the chivalry of his nature. There could be no doubt which party in the State possessed her sympathies, and at her proclamation he acted as sort of fugleman to the multitude, and regulated their acclamations. For Ireland the future seemed full of hope.

"This,"—he wrote to the secretary of the "General Association,"—"this is the very point of the great experiment we are making to ascertain whether or not Ireland can be well and justly governed by an Imperial Legislature, or whether we shall be driven back to look for a restoration of our native Parliament. This is the most happy period to work out the experiment. Ireland is now prepared to amalgamate with the entire empire. We are prepared for full and perpetual conciliation. Let Cork county and Yorkshire be put on a footing — let Ireland and England be identified. But for this purpose equality—of rights, laws and liberties — is essentially necessary. We desire no more, we will not take less. A real effectual union, or no union — such is the alternative."

At the general election in July he strained every nerve to ensure the success of the Melbourne administration. "The Queen and her Ministers," was the only pledge exacted at the hustings, and that nothing might impede the work of conciliation

he gave notice of his intention to move the dissolution of the "General Association."

The result hardly answered his sanguine expectations. With all the support he could furnish them, the Ministry obtained a bare majority of twenty-five. This, and the fact that O'Connell had again been returned for Dublin by an insignificant majority, stimulated his enemies to repeat the experiment of trying to drive him out of Parliament by subjecting him to another costly election petition. A society was formed, nicknamed, from the circumstance that it was presided over by Mr. Spottiswoode, one of the Queen's printers, "the Spottiswoode gang," and subscriptions were collected for the avowed purpose of testing the legality of the Irish elections wholesale. The uncertainty with which election petitions were then decided by committees, whose members not unfrequently preferred the claims of their party to those of strict justice, rendered the experiment really a formidable conspiracy, and evoked an outcry of indignation, not only from its intended victims but also from those in whom the spirit of fair play had not been altogether extinguished by political passion. Alluding to the subject at a meeting in the Crown and Anchor tavern on 21st February, 1838, O'Connell, after denouncing the machinations of the "Spottiswoode gang" in no measured language, declared it was time to speak out plainly when gentlemen who ranked high in society persistently perjured themselves in the committees of the House of Commons. For himself, he was ready to be a martyr to justice and truth, but not to false swearing,

and he repeated that there was foul perjury in the Tory committees of the House of Commons. Omitting the word "Tory" from the last sentence, no one dreamed of denying the statement; but it was one thing to know that disputed elections were decided according to the political colour of the members composing the committees, and another to be told by an Irish demagogue that English gentlemen were habitually guilty of perjury. The word stuck in Lord Maidstone's throat, and he moved that O'Connell's speech was a false and scandalous imputation upon the honour of the House. The House after an acrimonious discussion endorsed the charge, and by 226 votes to 197 decided that O'Connell should be reprimanded for a breach of its privileges. The day came that was to witness his humiliation; the Tory benches were crowded when the Speaker, calling on him to stand up in his place, read him a long and severe reproof on the impropriety of his conduct. Without even resuming his seat, O'Connell quietly moved for the appointment of a committee to investigate the matter, and to the astonishment of the House then and there repeated his charge. "I express," he said, "no regret: I retract nothing. I repent nothing. I do not desire unnecessarily to use harsh or offensive language. I wish I could find terms less objectionable and equally significant; but I can not, and I am bound to reassert what I asserted." He fully expected to be committed, and had made his arrangements accordingly; but to his amazement the House received his announcement in profound silence, and after a brief interval, convicted by its own

conscience, passed to the order of the day. The victory he had won did not, however, prevent the "Spottiswoode gang" continuing its efforts to oust him from his seat; but fortunately the fickle favour of the ballot returned him a Liberal committee and, after mulcting him in £1000 expenses, his enemies allowed him to escape.

The result was all the more remarkable, as his popularity in Dublin had been greatly damaged by his recent refusal to countenance trades-unionism in Ireland. His attitude on this question, as on the poor laws and the employment of child labour in factories, is of course open to criticism, and is less likely to command respect in the present day than it was in his own. Still, if the doctrine of *laissez-faire* has of recent years fallen somewhat into disrepute, owing to the growing complexity of the conditions of daily life, the fact does not detract from the courage with which he maintained his opinions in the face of such opposition as he had never before experienced in Ireland. So intense, indeed, was the indignation which his conduct aroused that, for days together he was hooted in the streets, and when he offered to argue the question his voice was drowned in a storm of angry yells and hisses. Popularity is dear to most men: it was dear to O'Connell; but it was not the first, nor was it to be the last, time in his life that he imperilled it in obedience to the dictates of conscience. As he had without hesitation risked his popularity, so did he a few weeks later sacrifice what to him as a lawyer was probably the highest object of his ambition. On 17th June he was offered

by Lord Mulgrave the position of Chief Baron of the Exchequer, rendered vacant through the death of Baron Joy. He declined the office, fearing that, having to preside over a court which had exclusive cognisance of those writs of rebellion which the tithe war had called into existence, he might not be able to act with the impartiality required from him, and that his desire to do justice to his political opponents might render him unjust to his friends. Mulgrave offered to make arrangements for his succeeding to the Mastership of the Rolls. It was a tempting offer. "You know," he wrote to Fitzpatrick, "that if I took anything, it would be the Rolls. But I could not bring myself to accept it. I am, perhaps, a fool, but I have not the heart to desert Ireland — Ireland that never yet had a steady friend."

Meanwhile the Melbourne administration, beginning its Irish legislation *de novo*, but taught by experience the necessity of conciliating opposition even at the expense of its principles, had succeeded in passing a Tithe Bill shorn of the appropriation clauses to which it originally owed its existence, and to which it had thitherto pinned its reputation, and a Poor Law which satisfied neither the supporters nor the opponents of state-provided relief. Still, so long as Drummond governed Ireland, O'Connell was content to overlook its legislative shortcomings. "Blessed be Heaven," he wrote on 11th August, "that the session is over, and that we have a respite from the enemy and good government for another year!" He was always glad to get back to Ireland;

but life, since his wife's death, was beginning to lose its interest for him, and his thoughts became more and more concentrated on heaven and futurity. The approach of autumn, which had once, with its hare-hunting, been to him the happiest period of the year, filled him now with sad reflections. He felt lonely and unhappy. The old love for his country still burned within him; but his success had been so little commensurate with his hopes, and the prospect was far from bright. He was growing old; the bustle and worry of political strife wearied him, and on returning to Ireland, instead of going straight to Darrynane, as his custom was, he retired for a season to the quiet cloisters of the Cistercian monastery of Mount Melleray, in county Waterford. He was accompanied by O'Neill Daunt, who has placed on record his impressions of the journey thither: the questions with which he pestered his companion; their reception by the abbot, the sub-prior and about twenty of the brethren; the vesper hymn and the solemn midnight service in the chapel on the lonely hillside during a terrific thunder-storm. But Daunt, amiable man though he no doubt was, was but a feeble Boswell, and one would gladly exchange some of his prattle for a glimpse at the elements of the tragedy that was beginning to work itself out in O'Connell's life.

On emerging from his retreat, O'Connell again threw himself into the work of political agitation. The time, he saw, could not be far distant when the Tories would once more be in power. So far as the Melbourne ministry was concerned, he was willing to

give it credit for the best intentions in the world; he was ready to believe that the Queen was actuated by the "noble ambition of making her reign celebrated by the pure and perfect pacification of Ireland." But it was clear that neither the ministry nor even the Queen could procure them the legislative relief they asked for. What, then, was to be done? What else but "to rouse the people — all the people of Ireland — into one simultaneous and combined movement, until it ceases to be prudent for the Tories to oppose our just claims?" For this purpose he set about founding a "Precursor Society." The title exactly expressed what he meant its objects to be. "The Precursors," he wrote, "may precede justice to Ireland from the United Parliament and the consequent dispensing with Repeal agitation. It may precede Repeal agitation — and will, shall and must precede Repeal agitation if justice be refused." But the name puzzled common people. "What," asked an English traveller of his car-driver, "is the object of the Precursor Society?" "Pray-curse-Sir!" was the ready answer: "Why, to pray curses on the inimies of Ireland, to be sure!"

The movement, however, despite all O'Connell's efforts to advertise it, failed to interest the public. Nor is the reason for their apathy far to seek. They had heard so much of flapping Repeal about the ears of Government as a means of extorting concessions that they could not bring themselves to believe that this was not merely another threat on O'Connell's part. Their indifference mortified him sorely. The year, in fact, was full of bitterness for him. In May,

1839, Melbourne resigned. The maladroitness of Wellington and Peel in insisting on the dismissal of the Queen's personal attendants, indeed, immediately restored him to office, and gave to his administration a faint gleam of popularity; but everybody saw that the downfall of the Whigs was only a question of time. Once more the Municipal Bill was rejected by the Lords, and nothing, O'Connell wrote bitterly, remained for Ireland but Repeal. The admission was wrung reluctantly from him. He had no longer any hope of being able to agitate the question successfully. His "Precursor" experiment had failed. The people had declined to answer to his summons. Repeal appeared to have lost all interest for them. Old age was stealing on him fast; domestic affairs troubled him; he was oppressed with debt, and the streams which supplied the "Tribute" seemed drying at their sources.

"I am, I confess," he wrote confidentially to Fitzpatrick in August, 1839, "very unhappy. I look upon myself in danger of ruin. The country is plainly tired out of my claims. I am, indeed unhappy. . . . I do not believe I will long survive the blow I apprehend from the desertion of me by the country at large. It weighs upon my heart and interferes with my health. . . . At my time of life, mental agony is *poisonous*. . . . God help me! What shall I do? I think of giving up my income, save an annuity of a small sum to myself and my two sons, and going, if I am received, to Clongowes, to spend the rest of my life there. I want a period of retreat to think of nothing but eternity. I sigh when I look at the present agitated aspect of affairs, foreign and

domestic, and vainly think that, if Ireland thought fit to support me, I might still be useful ; but it is plain I have worn out my claim on the people. . . . I am, I believe, on the verge of illness—the illness of despondency ; but it is clear I have no one to blame but myself. I hope against hope ; that is, there is a lurking expectation about me of relief, which my more sober judgment tells me cannot come. Sometimes my hand shakes as I write."

His success in securing the rejection of the Bank of Ireland Bill, and thereby inflicting a defeat on "the very worst of the Orange confederacies," afforded him some consolation, and under the influence of Fitzpatrick's cheery letter, the fit of gloom passed slowly away. An invitation to address the Liberals of the West Riding of Cork at Bandon, in December, revived his hopes of effecting a union between the Protestants and Catholics, and his hearty reception at the Anti-Corn-Law banquet in Manchester, on January 13, 1840, was a refreshing token of his undiminished popularity in England. The introduction of Stanley's Registration Bill, by giving him a foretaste of what might be expected from the Tories, completed the work of recovery. "The Bill," he wrote, "shall not and cannot pass, but Ireland must be roused." He sent instructions to Fitzpatrick to get up a great meeting in Easter week, and on 18th April founded the Repeal Association.

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CHAPTER XIV.

REPEAL AGITATION.

1840–1843.

THE start was not encouraging. The great room of the Corn Exchange, capable of accommodating five hundred persons, was distressingly empty when O'Connell, after allowing an extra half-hour to elapse, rose at the request of the chairman, John O'Neill of Fitzwilliam Square,— a wealthy and patriotic Protestant merchant who, having assisted as a volunteer in the victory of 1782, was devoting his declining years in trying to recover for Ireland that position of independence she had lost through the Act of Union,—to explain the objects for which he had caused the meeting to be summoned. He rose, he said, with a deep sense of the awful importance of the step he was about to propose to the Irish people, and with a full knowledge of the difficulties by which they were surrounded, and the obstacles with which they had to contend. They were about to enter on a struggle which would only terminate when ample justice had been done to Ireland by placing her on an equality with her sister

country, or by the establishment of their legislative independence. They commenced under auspices that might appear to afford little prospect of ultimate success. They would be laughed at and derided on all sides ; sneered at by friends who believed everything to be impracticable ; and opposed by malignant enemies delighted to find any opportunity of manifesting their hostility. But no matter. They had been derided and laughed at before, when they set about the accomplishment of that great moral revolution which had won religious freedom for themselves and others. They remembered the small origin of the Catholic Association, its progress and its triumph. They were assembled to take part in proceedings that would be memorable in the history of their country. But to this purpose they must be up and stirring. They must not forget the story of the fellow who, when the wheel of his cart stuck in the mud, prayed to Jupiter to help him. "You lazy rascal," said his godship, "put your shoulder to the wheel, and get along out of that." There was nothing else for them but to help themselves, and help themselves, with the aid of Heaven, they would.

The Convention Act, rendering representation by delegation illegal, being still in force, the machinery of the old Catholic Association sufficed for working the new movement. It was composed of three classes — Volunteers contributing £10 ; Members paying an annual subscription of £1 ; and Repealers contributing one penny a month, or one shilling in the year. These last formed the backbone of the whole enterprise. The progress of the Association

was at first slow and uncertain. This was to be expected. For so long as the Parliamentary session required O'Connell's presence in London, regular and energetic agitation was out of the question. Naturally those who expected a sudden upheaval of the country were disappointed; but O'Connell professed himself quite satisfied with the progress that was being made. Whatever doubts he may have had as to the success of the experiment, he kept them to himself. In public he was calm and confident. His language was that of buoyant youth. To hear him speak, to watch the deliberateness with which he formed his plans, one would have imagined that, instead of having sixty-five, he had only twenty-five years behind him. One thing was in his favour. He was in earnest. People, he said, had only to find that out, and the movement would spread like fire before the wind. The result justified his confidence.

Meanwhile, the Whigs still managed to retain office, and though death had robbed Ireland in the early spring of the year of that "tam cari capitis," Thomas Drummond, the result of the session was not altogether unsatisfactory. Not only had Stanley's insidious proposal to limit the elective franchise in Ireland been, for the nonce, frustrated, but the Lords, tired out, apparently, with the pertinacity with which they were assailed, had at last consented to pass an emaciated Municipal Reform Bill. Returning to Ireland about the middle of July, O'Connell at once resumed the work of agitation. He was fortunate enough to secure the adhesion of the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, and with his assistance

successfully launched the Repeal cause in Connaught. The circle of agitation widened gradually, and feeling that he might safely enjoy a month's recreation with his beagles, he proceeded to Darrynane about the latter end of August, leaving the management of the Association temporarily in the hands of its Secretary, T. M. Ray, and his son John.

Never since the death of his wife had Darrynane been so welcome to him as it was at this time ; never had the air of his mountain home seemed more exhilarating ; never the music of his beagles sweeter. The fresh sea breezes, the open-air exercise, were like medicine to him. Under their combined influence his mind recovered tone, his step some of its old elasticity. The feeling of despondency, which had of late years weighed upon him like a pall, gave way to a more hopeful view of things in general, and when the all-too short vacation drew to a close it found him once more ready for the turmoil of political strife. He had arranged to address a mass-meeting at Cork on 5th October. The day of his departure came. He was up at six o'clock. From Darrynane to Sheen is ten miles, as the crow flies. He hunted the whole distance on foot, and bidding his dogs and retainers adieu, proceeded alone to Killarney. There he met O'Neill Daunt by appointment, and in his company completed the remainder of the journey to Cork. Never had Daunt found him a more agreeable companion. At almost every turn of the road something would occur to arrest his attention and to suggest an anecdote. Occasionally, when both relapsed into silence he would break it, revealing the

current of his thoughts by repeating one of his favourite hymns —

"Lauda Sion salvatorem
Lauda Ducem et Pastorem," etc.

or the one beginning

"Stabat Mater Dolorosa
Juxta crucem lachrymosa
Dum pendebat filius."

As they approached Cork a vast concourse of people had assembled to welcome him at George the Fourth's Bridge, which spans the Lee about a mile to the west of the city. In their desire to honour him they would fain have taken the horses from the carriage in order to drag it themselves into Cork, and it was with no little difficulty that O'Connell compelled them to desist from their purpose. "No! no! no!" he exclaimed. "I never will let men do the business of horses if I can help it! Don't touch that harness, you vagabonds! I am trying to elevate your position, and I will not permit you to degrade yourselves."

The meeting in Batty's Circus was a great success, nor was it in the opinion of his hearers any disparagement to O'Connell's speech that it was redolent of Darrynane. A London journalist had derisively compared the Repeal cry to the cry of the Darrynane beagles. "Aye," retorted O'Connell, "but the fellow made a better hit than he intended, for my beagles never cease their cry until they catch their game." Next day he and Daunt proceeded to Limerick. On the road they were accosted

THE UPPER LAKE, KILLARNEY.

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by a beggar, who supported his demand for alms by claiming personal acquaintance with the Liberator. "But, my good man, I never saw you before." "Sure," returned the applicant, "that 's not what your honour's son would say, for he got me a place in Glasnevin Cemetery, only I had n't the luck to keep it." "Then, indeed, you were strangely unlucky," rejoined O'Connell, laughing, "for those who have places in cemeteries generally keep them." Shortly before reaching Limerick, they were met by a procession of ship-carpenters who had arranged a sort of aquatic fête in his honour. The idea of meeting Neptune on the dusty highway tickled O'Connell's fancy, and, entering into the spirit of the comedy, he expressed in appropriate language his high sense of "the condescending courtesy of the illustrious monarch of the deep." From Limerick, where he was entertained at a public banquet in the theatre, and made a powerful appeal for support to the patriotism of his audience by alluding to the history of "the city of the violated treaty," he continued his way to Ennis. Here he addressed another large repeal gathering. From Ennis he proceeded to Dublin, which he reached on the 11th. Three days afterwards there was a great provincial meeting at Kilkenny — the first of the "Precursor Monsters," as the meetings held at the time were afterwards dubbed. Daunt calculated that two hundred thousand persons were present on Croker's Hill; but John O'Connell, who occupied the position of chairman, placed the number, probably with greater exactitude,

at eighty thousand. It was a bleak, windy day, and the chairman's teeth chattered in his head; but the enthusiasm of O'Connell's listeners kept them warm, and they were well rewarded for their patience by hearing one of the most eloquent speeches he ever delivered. A fortnight later there was another meeting at Waterford, followed by one next day at Carrick-on-Suir: after which, O'Connell again returned to Darrynane.

So far the Repeal movement had not proved as successful as he had either hoped or expected. But the general apathy of the country did not discourage him. He had, as he said, nailed his colours to the mast and meant to stick by them. The excitement of the agitation did him good. His health was better than it had been for a long time past; for the nonce, thanks to Fitzpatrick, he had forgotten all about his debts, and looked forward to the future with all the buoyant hopefulness of youth. On 21st December he was back again in Dublin, speaking the same evening at a Charity Dinner. His energy, his confidence, his patience, seemed boundless. To one who, remembering the Catholic Association, had happened at this time to look into that long, low, and badly lighted room in which the Committee transacted its business, it might have seemed, at first sight, as if the clock of time had come to a standstill. Nothing appeared to have changed. Now, as then, it was the same man, only older, stouter, and more careworn, that directed its proceedings, no one dreaming of questioning his right or capability to do so.

"Amid the best and noblest of our isle
There was the same majestic form, the same heart-kindling smile;
But grief was on that princely brow — for others still he mourn'd.
He gazed upon poor fetter'd slaves, and his heart within him burn'd:
And he vowed before the captive's God to break the captive's chain,
To bind the broken heart and set the bondsman free again.
And fit was he our chief to be, in triumph or in need,
Who never wrong'd his deadliest foe in thought, or word, or deed."

New Year's Day, 1841, was celebrated in appropriate fashion by an open-air meeting at Howth. To the fishermen, who formed the bulk of his audience, O'Connell promised that when they recovered their national parliament the price of fish would rise. "You 'll have to steal more dogs, then, to make buoys of," said he jocularly, alluding to an alleged malpractice among them. The remark was received with roars of laughter. "See how he 's up to that same!" exclaimed an old salt, in admiration at the apparent omniscience of the Counsellor. The day following, a Dublin newspaper announced under the heading, "Keep Moving":

"Mr. O'Connell stands pledged to the following engagements: To attend the Repeal Association on the 4th; to preside at an Orphan Charity Dinner on the 5th; to agitate for Repeal in Mullingar on the 7th; in Cork on the 11th, and in Dungarvan on the 13th; to attend a

Reform meeting in Dublin on the 15th, and in Belfast on the 18th ; on the 19th to attend a Repeal dinner in the same town ; on the 21st and 22nd a Reform meeting and dinner at Leeds ; on the 23rd a Reform meeting at Leicester ; and on the 26th to take his seat in the House of Commons, attired in his grey frieze Repeal coat."

He kept his engagement to the letter. Many of his friends, fearing for his personal safety, did their best to dissuade him from going to Belfast and beard-ing the Orangemen in their stronghold. Their fears, as O'Connell found, were not without reason. As he passed through Lisburn a day before he was ex-pected, under the assumed name and character of C. A. Charles, a celebrated ventriloquist, his atten-tion was arrested by a placard, headed in large letters, "O'Connell's Insult to the North," remind-ing the good "Protestants" of the town that exactly two centuries had elapsed since Phelim O'Neill, with his rabble rout, had been defeated by a few of Lord Conway's troops in Castle Street, and calling on them to treat O'Connell and his Kailrunt infantry "to a thunder of Northern Repeal" that would astonish the brewers of sedition and treason, and put to rout his "darlint pisintry." Under the direction of "Derry Dawson" and the Rev. Dr. Cook — the Dr. Kane of that day — the Orangemen certainly succeeded in making Belfast "hot" for him. In anticipation of a riot, Government had drafted five companies of foot, two troops of horse, and two thousand extra policemen into the town for the pur-pose of protecting his meeting ; but their presence did not prevent an Orange mob from smashing the

windows of the hall in which he held his Temperance Soirée, and from paying a similar compliment to the hotel where he had taken up his quarters. He escaped without personal injury; but the experiment of assailing the Orangemen in their stronghold was one that he was not tempted to repeat.

In consequence of a direct vote of want of confidence in his administration, Lord Melbourne dissolved Parliament in June. O'Connell, who had long foreseen the event, took a pessimistic view of the situation. "If the Tories," he wrote, "carry the representation of Ireland, and, in particular, of Dublin, they will totally deprive us of the benefit of the corporate reform." The result of the general election went far to confirm his anticipations. He himself lost his seat for Dublin, and had to take refuge at Cork. Of his once famous "tail," hardly a dozen obtained re-election. On the whole, however, the Whigs managed to hold their own in Ireland, and O'Connell's election as Lord Mayor of the reformed corporation, on 1st November, completely effaced the bad effects of his rejection as M.P. He was the first Roman Catholic that had held the office in all the hundred and fifty years that had elapsed since the Revolution. Naturally, to those of his own creed his capture of this hitherto impregnable fortress of Orangeism was a matter of infinite satisfaction. His enemies, of course, expressed their certain conviction that he would misuse his office for political purposes. But it must be confessed that his conduct, during his tenure of it, furnished little justification for the assertion. Replying to a question put to him shortly before the

election by Alderman Boyce, as to how he would act in his capacity of Lord Mayor upon the Repeal question, he had pledged himself that in his capacity of Lord Mayor no one should be able to discover from his conduct what his politics were, and of what shade were the religious tenets he held. In his individual capacity, however, he was a Repealer—to his last breath, a Repealer—because he was thoroughly, honestly, and conscientiously, though perhaps mistakenly, convinced that the repeal of the Union would be fraught with the richest benefits to their common country. His language to the crowd that cheered him to his house, after the election, was couched in the same strain. They had that day won a great and memorable victory: they had won it without riot, tumult, or bloodshed. Who should say in the face of it that they would not achieve the restoration of their own Parliament in a similar way? Meantime he called on them to enjoy their triumph in a manner worthy of the day, and to let their demeanour be characterised by kindliness, beneficence, and charity to all men, giving thanks to an all-bounteous Providence for having permitted them to see the realisation of such blessings for their long-afflicted country.

He himself set them an admirable example. "It amuses me much," he said, "to think that on the very first day of my sitting I had to make a decree against a priest." But more significant of his desire to conciliate his opponents even than his impartiality on the bench was the arrangement he effected, by which Catholics and Protestants were to hold the

mayoral chair each year in alternate succession. Green Street court presented an animated scene when he took his seat for the first time on the magisterial bench. He was much amused at the difficulty the tip-staves had in keeping it clear for business. "In Cork, I remember," he said, "the crier trying to disperse the crowd by exclaiming: 'All ye blackguards that is n't lawyers quit the coort.'" For himself he felt the honour conferred on him intensely, though the execution of his office entailed much personal discomfort and, what he deplored most of all, compelled him to forego his usual visit to Darrynane. When it was known at Darrynane that pressure of business would prevent his leaving Dublin, and that that year there would be no hare hunting, the grief of his retainers was inexpressible. "There was," his son John wrote, "quite a *scene* upon the mountain yesterday when Denis McCruachan told the huntsmen you could not come. Two or three of them, led by Curramac, fairly sat down and cried. . . . There are curses 'not loud, but deep' on all corporations that ever existed."

The Loyal National Repeal Association continued to meet as usual in the Corn Exchange; but O'Connell's resolution to act impartially in his capacity of Lord Mayor led to a practical suspension of the agitation during his year of office. His resolution did not, however, prevent his attending to his parliamentary duties. He was in his seat at the commencement of the session on 3rd February, 1842, and remained in London till Parliament rose in August. But, with the exception of Peel's income-tax

proposal, which he combated on the ground that it was essentially a war tax, advising the substitution for it of a legacy duty on real property, and the debate on the Distress of the Country, the proceedings of Parliament interested him only slightly. It was during the latter debate that, in reply to a taunt thrown out from the ministerial bench that the Opposition, while criticising the policy of the Government, had offered no practical suggestion for the relief of the nation, he uttered the memorable words:

"There is a plan. The simplest housewife could adopt it. The people are hungry. Let them eat. They said there was no food. Let them tell him no such thing. There were at the moment he spoke upwards of a million and a half quarters of wheat lying in bond, waiting until higher prices became high enough for the landlords to allow the people to be fed."

For some time he hoped that between their Corn Law and Budget proposals the ministry would fall to the ground; but as he saw the danger safely tided over and the end of his mayoralty coming in view, he began to make preparations for renewing the agitation in Ireland.

"So soon as I arrive in Ireland," he wrote to Fitzpatrick, on 6th August, "I will publish my address to my own constituents; all I desire is, to make them, clergy and laity, understand the real position of public affairs. I want every Irishman to be convinced of this truth: that there is nothing worth looking for save the power of governing ourselves, and of husbanding our national resources by the restoration of our domestic legislature. Have, I repeat it, prepared a list of all the parishes in

Leinster, with the names of the clergy of each parish, and of every layman therein, who shall have taken, at any bygone time, an active part in the Repeal agitation. It is by detailed and persevering exertions that public opinion will recover its tone and energy in Ireland."

A few days afterwards he landed at Kingstown. His son John happened at the time to be staying at Monkstown, near Dunleary, for the sake of the sea air, and, paying him a visit there in company with O'Neill Daunt, the latter thought he had never seen him more lively and animated, or more disposed to enjoy himself and to contribute to the merriment of others than he was on this occasion. Besides O'Connell, his son John, and Daunt, there were present the Secretary of the Association, T. M. Ray, and Tom Steele, of Clare election fame, shortly to be promoted "Head Pacificator" of the Association. Naturally, the subject uppermost in the minds of all of them was Repeal. None of them were satisfied with the slow progress the agitation was making; but the difficulty was to find some means of stimulating it. After discussing the situation for some time, O'Connell suggested to his companions that they should each undertake a separate mission for the purpose of preaching up Repeal in the three provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught. The suggestion was readily adopted, and on 12th September the three "Repeal Inspectors," as they were dubbed, John O'Connell, Ray, and Daunt, set out from Dublin on their respective missions. Meanwhile, O'Connell was enjoying himself to the top of his bent at Darrynane. It was a delightful autumn; his pack was in splendid

condition, killing, as he boasted, with ease six or seven hares a day ; and no one, seeing him at their heels clearing stone dykes and bog-holes with more agility than many a younger man, could have believed that he had entered on his sixty-seventh year. In October he was recalled to Dublin. His year of office as Lord Mayor had almost expired, and he rejoiced at the prospect of being shortly relieved from its multiplied annoyances. "A fortnight more," he said, with a laugh, "and I shall have the privilege of knocking down any man who calls me 'My Lord.'" But what a fortnight it was ! Thirteen days, the time limited by statute, in which to revise the burgess-roll of the city, containing eighteen thousand names each to be severally investigated ! The thing was impossible, and wagers were freely made against his being able to accomplish it. To the astonishment of everybody, he succeeded five minutes before the time had elapsed. It was a herculean task ; but O'Connell felt confident of his ability to perform it, and even found time for a passing joke.

The name of Myles Magrath being called, one of the collectors was asked what profession Mr. Magrath belonged to ?

COLLECTOR—"He is crier in the Court of Conscience."

LORD MAYOR—"Mr. Magrath would have to cry a long time, indeed, in that court before conscience would answer his calls there."

A gentleman complained that his name had been written Smith, and not, as it should have been, Smyth, on the roll.

THE MANSION HOUSE, DUBLIN.

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LORD MAYOR—"You wish to have your name spelt Smyth, and not Smith?"

MR. SMYTH—"Exactly, my Lord. You were under the impression that I was *S-m-i-t-h*, and when remonstrated with to spell it *S-m-y-t-h*, you are reported to have said to Mr. Stokes that you would not knock out my *i* to please him; that I was a *smith* at all events, and that I might *hammer away*. Pray have the error rectified."

LORD MAYOR (laughing)—"Oh, certainly, Sir. I am sorry that you were occasioned any uneasiness. We *will* knock out your *i*, since you desire it, and we 'll give you a *y* with a sweeping tail as long as my own."

The first of November came, and O'Connell, having surrendered the insignia of his office to his successor, Alderman George Roe, and congratulated the citizens of Dublin on having been able to select for their chief magistrate a man of such high character, "who, in a country where party spirit unfortunately ran to too high a pitch, had been so singularly fortunate as to conciliate to himself the good wishes and good opinions of all classes indiscriminately," returned to Darrynane. Meanwhile, the missionary efforts of the three "Repeal Inspectors," Daunt, Ray, and John O'Connell were beginning to bear fruit. Not only did the Repeal Rent, in consequence of their exertions, take what was then considered a great jump from £40 to £150 a week, but they were fortunate in removing much of the ingrained suspicion existing in the popular mind as to the sincerity of the agitation. Still it had to be

confessed that the progress being made was not commensurate with the energy expended over it, and each day made it clearer that unless some means were devised of stimulating it, the movement would, like its predecessors, expire of inanition.

In this dilemma all eyes were directed to Darrynane where, in his retirement, O'Connell was anxiously pondering over the situation. Light at last broke in upon him. On 21st January, 1843, he came up to Dublin, and a few days later announced his intention of moving in the Dublin Corporation on 21st February a resolution affirmatory of the right of Ireland to a resident Parliament. The words of the resolution recall to mind the famous Declaration of Rights submitted by Grattan to the Irish House of Commons on 19th April, 1780. Sixty years and more had passed away since the Irish Parliament had confirmed Grattan's resolution. In 1843, Ireland possessed not even the form of a Parliament to which such an appeal could be addressed. What little spark of national life still survived existed only in her corporations. During the debate on the Municipal Corporations Bill, O'Connell had promised to blow that spark into a flame, and out of every corporation to create a normal school for peaceful agitation in Ireland. The time had come for him to keep his promise and put his theory to the test. The postponement of the motion for a week added an extra fillip to popular expectation. On 28th February, from an early hour in the morning, William Street was thronged with people. It was eleven o'clock before the Lord Mayor arrived, and when

O'Connell shortly afterwards rose to address the meeting, the Hall was crowded to suffocation. The cheers that greeted him showed unmistakably on which side the sympathies of his audience were. But he had not, he said, come there to convince those whom experience had already convinced by the irresistible evidence of their senses. He was there to address his arguments to the entire Irish nation — to the British people — to the civilized world. He had nine propositions to demonstrate:

First: The capability and capacity of the Irish nation for an independent legislature.

Second: The perfect right of Ireland to have a domestic Parliament.

Third: That that right was fully established by the transactions of 1782.

Fourth: That the most beneficial effects to Ireland resulted from her parliamentary independence.

Fifth: The utter incompetence of the Irish Parliament to annihilate the Irish Constitution by the Union.

Sixth: That the Union was no contract or bargain; that it was carried by the greatest corruption and bribery, added to force, fraud, and terror.

Seventh: That the Union produced the most disastrous results to Ireland.

Eighth: That the Union can be abolished by peaceable constitutional means, without the violation of law, and without the destruction of property and life.

Ninth: That the most salutary results, and none other, must arise from a repeal of the Union.

He spoke for four hours. His speech is, by general consent, regarded as the ablest plea ever uttered on behalf of the repeal of the Union. It possessed all the merits and none of the defects of that which he had delivered before the House of Commons in 1834. It was vigorous, well arranged, and well spoken. The task of replying to it devolved on a young Conservative barrister of great promise—Isaac Butt, whose subsequent career as leader of the national party furnished the best refutation of the arguments he employed on this occasion. Other speakers took part in the debate. On the third day the corporation divided: forty-five voting in favour of the resolution, fifteen against it. Almost as important as the matter of the debate was the manner in which it was conducted. If the Dublin Corporation could discuss the repeal of the Union with so much candour, intelligence, and courtesy, what reason was there, it was pertinently asked, for supposing that an Irish House of Commons must necessarily resemble a bear garden?

The effect of the Corporation Debate was magical. The agitation, which had hitherto hung fire, broke at once into full activity. The Repeal Rent which, up to that time, had found its way into the treasury of the Association in driblets and by circuitous routes, now began to flow in a continuous stream. In February, for the whole month, it had only amounted to about £300; in May it had risen to over £2000 a week, and by the end of the year it

reached a grand total of £48,000. So rapidly did the number of the Repealers increase that, in March, the great room in the Corn Exchange was found wholly inadequate to accommodate those seeking admission, and on the 30th of that month O'Connell laid the foundation stone of a new building, capable of accommodating between four and five thousand persons, on which he bestowed the name of Conciliation Hall. As the movement grew in volume, the machinery controlling it underwent a rapid development. The staff of twelve or fifteen persons which, at the beginning of 1843, had sufficed to work the Association, increased during the course of the year to forty-eight, and continued at that number till nearly the middle of 1845. The Association itself met weekly on Mondays. It had its committees for general and financial purposes, consisting of about one hundred and fifty members, for parliamentary business, for manufactures, grievances, poor-law abuses, extermination, employment, etc. Everything was conducted with the greatest regularity and business-like precision, under the management of its indefatigable Secretary, Thomas Mathew Ray. Each day brought from fifty to sometimes over two hundred letters, which had to be read, filed, and copied, their contents to be noted, and answers written to them. There were cash-receipt and cash-payment books for sums ranging from several hundreds of pounds to a few pence; parochial ledgers alphabetically arranged for each county, containing all particulars relating to wardens, committees, reports, repeal reading-rooms, etc.;

alphabetical list-books of volunteers, members, and wardens; books of American contributors; scrap-books, containing newspaper slips pasted in with reports of every occurrence, remotely as well as intimately connected with the movement: forming, in effect, a complete political history of Ireland from 1839 to 1849. For the purpose of keeping the movement within constitutional bounds, a Repeal police force presided over by Head Pacificator Thomas Steele was established; arbitration courts opened for the arranging local disputes and preventing outbursts of agrarian outrage; and Repeal wardens appointed in every parish to watch over the interests of the peasantry, to facilitate the collection of the Rent, and to attend to the circulation of newspapers recording the proceedings of the Association.

Apart from the Repeal agitation proper, but auxiliary to it, and of the greatest importance in developing and strengthening its operations, was the Temperance movement of Father Mathew, and the foundation of the *Nation* newspaper as the organ of the Young Ireland party. Of Father Mathew's Temperance movement which, starting in Cork towards the latter end of the thirties, extended with such rapidity that it soon embraced half the population of Ireland, it is not an exaggeration to say that it was one of the most stupendous moral revolutions the world has ever seen. Its effect on the Irish people, despite the opposition it encountered, was profound and lasting. From a nation of proverbially hard drinkers Ireland suddenly became a nation of sober men and women.

FATHER MATHEW.

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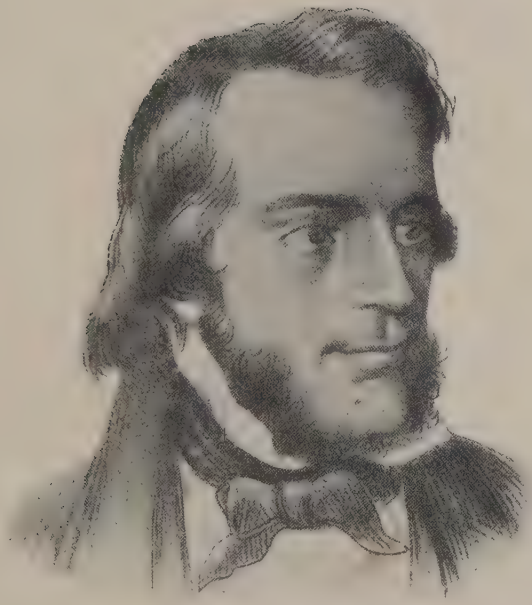
"Never," says the historian, "did warlike conqueror achieve a success comparable with that of this humble priest. Public houses were shut up, breweries and distilleries thrown out of work, the consumption of whiskey decreased by one half. . . . Crime diminished with the decrease of drink, and even the Irish government formally acknowledged the benefits which temperance had conferred on Ireland."

O'Connell was one of the first to welcome the movement, declaring, to the astonishment of Fitzpatrick, that Father Mathew was "entitled to the nation's gratitude beyond all other living men." Though not himself, apparently, a pledged teetotaller, he showed by his conduct, in refraining more and more from the use of intoxicating liquors, his appreciation of the benefits of temperance, and the obligation placed upon him by his position of conforming so far as in him lay to the newly awakened conscience of the nation in the matter. For Repeal the advantage of the Temperance movement was inestimable, in so far as it not only rendered possible those monster meetings, to which reference will presently be made, which formed the glory and culmination of the agitation, but also gave to them a moral significance they would otherwise not have possessed.

Of the Young Ireland movement, it is unfortunately impossible to speak in the same terms of unqualified approval. From its inception, through the foundation of the *Nation* newspaper in October, 1842, it was essentially a literary movement. Its object was "to create and foster public opinion in

Ireland and make it racy of the soil." Of its founders, Thomas Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy, and John Dillon, it may at once be said that they were men whose genius and true nobility of character reflected lustre on the land of their birth. Patriots of unsullied fame, poets whose verse still makes the blood tingle, and the colour come and go, men of letters with well-stored minds and facile pens, they burned to rescue their country from the bondage of an intolerable tyranny that was crushing out every feeling and aspiration of nationality. Born in the stormy times of the Catholic Emancipation agitation, they threw themselves with an ardour and enthusiasm into that of Repeal which threatened to carry all before it. Never had such success attended any effort of journalism as that which fell to the lot of the *Nation*. Well written, well edited, well printed, it could hardly be produced in quantities sufficient to meet the demand for it. It was devoured, not read. The impetus the movement gave to Repeal, though hardly so great as they fancied, was unmistakable. Under its influence the hitherto unadorned cards of membership blossomed out into emblematic pictures, recalling the main incidents of Irish history, ornamented with the portraits of heroes who would hardly have recognised themselves in the atmosphere of idealism through which they were viewed. Dathi, and Brian Boroimhe, Ollamh Fodhla, and Aodh O'Neill were dragged out of their obscurity, cleansed from the accretion of Saxon aspersion that had gathered round them, and re-established on their pedestals of fame. One figure — more authentic



THOMAS DAVIS.

FROM DUFFY'S "LIFE OF THOMAS DAVIS."

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than any of them, Theobald Wolfe Tone — was conspicuous by his absence. The omission was a significant one, for no one was more constantly present to their thoughts, no one more potently the main factor in their speculations than Tone. He, far more than O'Connell, was their ideal of a political leader. For O'Connell they had, indeed, a certain amount of respect, mixed with a good deal of contempt. They despised his methods of agitation as vulgar, and directed to merely material ends. They spoke slightingly of men nurtured in "the feminine contests of the Bar." They hated the crooked and often dirty bypaths of political intrigue. They loathed the parasites that battened on the Rent. They argued that passion and imagination had won victories which reason and self-interest would have attempted in vain. The poet's pen, the soldier's sword, these were their weapons: the one to sow, the other to reap the harvest. O'Connell speedily recognised the drift of the Young Ireland propaganda, and at once, and most decidedly, discountenanced it. He had, all his life long, been preaching and practising the doctrine of constitutional agitation, and here, despite all his efforts, was the hydra of rebellion striking out its head again. It was irritating at the least. The danger of playing on the inflammable nature of the Irish peasant was too palpable to be overlooked. Unfortunately, his warning was despised, and after causing a split in the Association, and running a course that might have been predicted of it, the Young Ireland movement was quenched in the blood of an abortive

insurrection. As yet, however, it was only poetry, and there was nothing to show that the divergence of view between Old and Young Ireland would be attended with any such disastrous consequences.

Meanwhile Repeal was spreading like fire before the wind, as O'Connell predicted it would do when once the nation perceived he was in earnest. In order to fan it into a general conflagration, O'Connell, shortly after the Corporation Debate, announced his intention of holding a public meeting in each county in Ireland in turn. The first was held at Trim, in county Meath, on 19th March. The spectacle of thirty thousand persons meeting in orderly array to protest against the Union, and to petition for its repeal, produced a profound effect on the public mind in Ireland and England. A month later a second meeting was held at Mullingar, in the neighbouring county of West Meath, where it was calculated that at least one hundred thousand persons were present to listen to a Repeal address from O'Connell. The meaning of this second "monster," as it was dubbed by the *Times*, could not be mistaken.

"See what it is to persevere," said O'Connell. "Last year — and, indeed, from the very commencement — I threw out state paper after state paper, demonstrating the evils of the Union, and for a time they seemed to fall dull and unheeded on the public ear. But now all men are alive, all are active, all are eager for success. I cast my bread upon the waters, and now after many days I have found it."

He himself was indefatigable in his efforts "to keep up steam."

During the spring and summer, accompanied by a numerous staff, he traversed the country almost without intermission. His energy was amazing. One day he was at Kells, the next at Drogheda. From Ennis he flew to Clonmel; from Kilkenny to Skibereen; from Skibereen to Athlone and Galway. Hardly a place of any importance, outside Ulster, was unvisited by him. All along his route the people turned out *en masse* to welcome him and by their contributions to give wings to the movement. On 21st May there was another "monster" meeting at Cork, at which it was calculated that not less than five hundred thousand persons were present. The meeting was the Association's answer to Peel's threat to uphold the Union even at the risk of civil war. Alluding to the threat of force, O'Connell said:

"We are told that some desperate measures are to be taken for the suppression of public opinion upon the question of Repeal; and that the Ministry have it in contemplation to bring in a coercive bill. They may annihilate the Constitution; but to this I pledge myself: they shall have some trouble in doing so. I will go to the House of Commons for the purpose of opposing their bill; I will resist the bill to the utmost of my power as long as it is not law. When it becomes a statute, I will obey it: I will obey every law, unless I can manage to drive a coach and six through it; but I will discover some plan whereby the Irish people shall have the means of expressing their sentiments upon this vital question. Unless they gag me, I will find the means of speaking to

Ireland. . . . Friends may desert me, foes may threaten, but I will never forsake the path that I have proposed for myself. I will violate no law, I will outrage no ordinance of man nor of Heaven ; but as long as there remains to me one inch of the Constitution on which I can place my footstep I will find some Archimedean point whereon to plant the lever with which I will still uphold the fainting liberties of my country."

The day following the Cork meeting, the Lord Lieutenant, Earl de Grey, putting his own construction on Peel's declaration, removed O'Connell and Lord French from the magistracy of their respective counties. As a protest against this high-handed and unconstitutional proceeding, Lord Cloncurry, Sir Richard Musgrave, Henry Grattan, Jr., Smith O'Brien, and other prominent Whigs, retired from the Commission of the Peace, with the result of swelling the ranks of Repeal with valuable recruits, extending the operation of the courts of arbitration, and sending the Rent up the following week to £2200. But it was soon to appear that Peel's threat of force was not idly meant. On 29th May, the Irish Chief Secretary, Lord Eliot, introduced an Arms Bill, or, as it might with more propriety have been called, a Bill for disarming the Catholic peasantry of Ireland, into the House of Commons. Its object was prospective and preventive, rather than retrospective and retaliatory. So far as the condition of the country was concerned, it was absolutely uncalled for. The palpable injustice of it aroused the indignation of the opposition, and so strenuous was the resistance offered to it that August was

drawing to a close before it received the royal assent. Encouraged by this unexpected diversion in his favour, O'Connell pushed on the agitation with all his might. Monster meeting succeeded monster meeting in rapid succession, culminating in the ever memorable one at Tara, on 15th August.

Tuesday, the 15th of August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in the Roman Catholic calendar, broke warm and bright. Dublin was astir from an early hour in the morning. Little crowds of people jostled one another good-humouredly in the streets as they completed their preparations for the day's excursion, or watched those of their more fortunate neighbours. Not a horse, not a car, not a vehicle of any shape or size, but had been hired to go that day to Tara. Windows and balconies filled with gaily-dressed women; temperance bands parading the streets with banners, making a cheerful noise; horsemen bearing long lances with pennons waving in the breeze, gave animation to the scene. The enthusiasm of the people was unbounded: for had not the Liberator promised that that year should witness the Repeal of the Union, and the restoration of their native Parliament? The Repeal wardens were at their posts directing everything with the greatest precision. It was nine o'clock when O'Connell, having breakfasted with some friends in Baggot Street, entered his carriage and gave the signal to start. Cheer upon cheer rent the air as the procession, passing through the main streets and across the Liffey, wound its way along the great northern road past Phœnix Park in the

direction of Dunshaughlin. Of the horsemen in attendance, it was calculated that the number did not fall short of ten thousand, and it was afterwards discovered that toll had been paid that day at Cabragh, Phibsborough, and Blanchardstown on thirteen hundred vehicles. This was only one contingent. From all other points of the compass similar contingents were at the same time converging on Tara.

For days before, the Hill had presented tokens of unwonted activity. In the very centre of the topmost level of it joiners had been at work erecting a mighty platform for the speakers. By consent of the bishop of the diocese, numerous altars had been raised for the celebration of the mass. Repealers from distant counties — from far-off Clare, from Longford and Galway, bringing their provisions with them — had been bivouacking on it, some of them for nights together, under the open sky. Tara of the kings! What memories the place awakened in the minds of many who that day visited it! — memories of the ancient past mingling with those of times quite recent. From Ollamh Fodhla, who

> "first ordained
> The great assembly, where the nobles met,
> And priests and poets and philosophers,
> To make new laws, and to correct the old
> And to advance the honour of his country"—

from St. Patrick, storming the citadel of paganism under the banner of the Cross of Christ, down to the Rebellion of 1898 and the "Croppies' Grave," on which the wild geranium with its little pike-head blossom, streaked with crimson, blows like Nature's

apologue in sweet profusion. Standing on the top of the Hill, it was a solemn and impressive sight that met the eye that August morning. For miles around the country was black with human beings wending their way to the place of meeting. Close on a million persons, it was calculated, had come together ; but calculation was out of the question. As far as the eye could reach, nothing could be seen but compact masses of people moving towards the central point. Not less impressive than the number of them was their orderly demeanour, the perfect confidence reposed by each in the integrity of his neighbour, the absence of rowdyism of every description, the gentle courtesy displayed towards the women and children, of whom there were thousands present. The deep devotion with which, bareheaded and on bended knees, they listened to the ministrations of their religion ; the savour of incense wafted through the air from a hundred censers ; the silence broken only by the silver tinkle of the sacring-bell and the low hum of the priests' voices, added solemness to the scene, and gave to the demonstration the appearance of a religious service.

From Dublin to Tara is some twenty-four miles. It was high noon before O'Connell's carriage reached the outskirts of the meeting. A burst of music from the assembled temperance bands announced his arrival, and from the whole multitude there went up one tremendous shout of welcome. It was the crowning day of O'Connell's life. Victories he had won before — victories in the Senate House, and in the Law Courts ; but never such an one as this.

Before such a demonstration as this, all former achievements seemed to dwindle to nothing, and he might well have been forgiven for thinking that they had that day reached a turning-point in their national history: that after long years of suffering and oppression, Ireland was once more to become a nation. And the means by which the victory had been attained were as important as — ten times more important than — the victory itself. All his life long he had been teaching his countrymen that constitutional victories must be won by constitutional means; that for them no political change whatsoever was worth the shedding of a single drop of human blood; and his countrymen seemed to have learned the lesson. If they had so, the future was full of hope for them and for their children's children. His speech was a pæan of triumph. Was it of him, then, the poet wrote?—

"Once to my sight the giant thus was given,
Walled by wide air and roofed by boundless heaven;
Beneath his feet the human ocean lay,
And wave on wave flowed into space away.
Methought no clarion could have sent its sound
E'en to the centre of the hosts around;
And, as I thought, rose the sonorous swell,
As from some church-tower swings the silvery bell;
Aloft and clear from airy tide to tide
It glided easy, as a bird may glide.
To the last verge of that vast audience sent
It played with each wild passion as it went."

TARA HILL.

FROM PETRIE'S "ANTIQUITIES OF TARA HILL."

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CHAPTER XV.

COLLAPSE OF THE REPEAL AGITATION.

1843–1847.

CONSCIOUS of his own intention not to violate the law, O'Connell watched the operations of Government in flooding the country with troops, strengthening old and erecting new fortifications, half amusedly, half contemptuously. It always takes two to make a quarrel, and for himself he was determined, as he said, not to run his head against a stone wall. After Tara, several other large demonstrations were held, and it was resolved to wind up the series by a final "monster" at Clontarf. It was at Clontarf that Brian Boroimhe had expelled the Danes from Ireland in 1014. What fitter spot, it was asked, could be found for completing the expulsion of another set of intruders? The meeting was fixed to take place on Sunday, 8th October. It was well advertised, and people were beginning to flock thither from the more distant parts of the island, as well as from Liverpool, Glasgow, and other towns in England and Scotland, when suddenly, without a word of warning, Government issued a proclamation,

late in the afternoon of the day preceding the meeting, forbidding it. The situation was critical in the extreme; for of the ability of Government, even without the extra precautions it had been taking, to enforce its command there was not the shadow of a doubt. O'Connell, who had long anticipated such a contingency, at once issued a proclamation in his own name, countermanding the meeting. One of his trustiest followers, Peter Martin, was sent down, post-haste, to Clontarf, with instructions to cause the platform that had been erected to be removed; and volunteers were enlisted to scour the country for the purpose of warning the people of what had happened, and commanding them to return to their homes.

When the secret despatches of Government are one day opened for the public, it will be known what object was to be served in postponing the proclamation till a collision between the military and the people was all but inevitable. With our present information it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that those responsible for the manœuvre really contemplated the perpetration of another Peterloo on a more extended scale. "*Pour la canaille faut la mitraille*," hummed Wellington, as he read the Government proclamation with evident satisfaction. That such a calamity, to call it by a no worse name, was avoided thanks are due alone to O'Connell. Never had he done more to prove his incontestable right to lead the Irish nation, and the sincerity of the doctrines he preached, never more to advance the cause of Irish freedom, and to earn the gratitude of

TWO GREAT CHIEFTAINS.

FROM A PRINT IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

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mankind, than he did by his conduct on this occasion. We see it all now. We see how incomparably greater he was than the little men around him who, having satisfied themselves on the strength of an ambiguous passage in some of his recent speeches that he was going to forswear the principles of a lifetime, taunted him with moral cowardice, vapoured about what Eliot and Hampden would have done in his place, dubbed the proclamation "a mere advertisement," and in cold blood formulated the monstrous theory that Government, having issued an illegal proclamation, ought to have been afforded the further privilege of putting itself in the wrong by shooting down a body of unarmed peasantry! Patriotism is an excellent thing, but knocking one's head against a stone wall is usually described by some other epithet. To someone, quoting Horace's line, "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*," O'Connell replied, "But, credit me, a living friend is worth a churchyard full of dead ones." His incorrigible philistinism was intolerable to "young men": only one sees life differently at threescore years and ten than at thirty.

A week later, Government followed up its attack on the Association by issuing writs for the arrest of O'Connell, his son John, and his chief colleagues, Thomas Mathew Ray, Thomas Steele, Richard Barrett, John Gray, Charles Gavan Duffy, and two parish priests, Father Tyrrell and Father Tierney—two men so unknown to fame that everybody wondered who they were when their names were mentioned—on a charge of conspiring to create

discontent and disaffection among the liege subjects of the Queen, and with contriving, "by means of intimidation and the demonstration of great physical force to procure and effect changes to be made in the government, laws, and constitution of this realm." Bail was accepted: for O'Connell himself in £1000, and two sureties each in £500. On 2nd November the indictment, ninety-seven feet of parchment, "a masterpiece of intricate alternative pleading," was sent to the grand jury, and after six days' deliberation a true bill was returned against the accused. "Criminal justice," remarked a Quarterly Reviewer, "had formerly fished with a hook: she now fished with a net." The accused pleaded on 21st November, and the 15th January, 1844, was fixed as the day on which the trial was to begin. In the interval, O'Connell went down to Darrynane.

When the intention of Government to prosecute was first announced, he had been afraid that the charge would run to high treason, and his spirits were greatly depressed, looking upon his life as certain to be forfeited. When he heard it was only for conspiracy, he scoffed at the whole proceeding, as likely, indeed, to be harassing and tedious, but in no other respect formidable. To Fitzpatrick he wrote, on 9th December: "I have already been hunting two days. . . . I already feel the immense benefit of my native air and my delightful exercise. I am regaining strength and vigour to endure whatever my sentence may be. You will believe that I shall endure it without shrinking or compromise, come what may." He spoke bravely, but the

future troubled him. Repeal, he clearly saw, had received a blow from which it was not likely to recover during his lifetime. The hope, so near to realisation, which had buoyed him up during the last six months, and inspired him with an energy amounting almost to madness, had suddenly all but been extinguished. Gladly would he have retired from the struggle ; but retreat was no longer possible. Like a ship which, under full sail, strikes on a hidden reef, and after a tremendous recoil again bounds forward of its own motion, the impetus he had given to the agitation forced him on without his own will. But he knew what the end must be. He had measured his strength with Government, and he had been defeated. Fine and imprisonment confronted him, for of his conviction he had not the slightest doubt. He was too old to start another agitation. Public and private cares oppressed him. He feared that the people, in a sudden outburst of indignation, might still afford Government a pretext for drawing the sword. His debts weighed upon him like a millstone round his neck, and he was driven, much against his will, to reduce his establishment at Darrynane, and to retrench his expenses all round. As yet there were no signs of mental weakness ; but there can be little question that the germs of progressive paralysis of the brain were sown at this time.

On 15th January, 1844, the day of the opening of the trial, business was practically suspended in Dublin. The Attorney General's announcement that he had discovered a foul and wicked conspiracy had raised public expectation to the highest pitch. At

the Four Courts the crush was so great as to render it necessary to barricade the entrance to the Queen's Bench. The quays were lined with people, and in the court itself not a seat was to be had for love or money. Almost every newspaper in Ireland and England was specially represented. On the Bench sat Chief Justice Pennefather, and Justices Crampton, Perrin, and Burton. The flower of the Irish Bar was retained, either for the prosecution or the defence. But of more interest to the public than either judges, advocates, or even the accused, was the jury. Never in the annals of jury-packing in Ireland had the necessity of procuring a conviction led to such an outrageous misuse of the powers reposed in the Crown as on the present occasion. Every art, every trick, had been practised to secure a jury subservient enough to register the decree of Government. From first to last the trial was a bitter satire on the administration of justice in Ireland. The panel was tampered with, and the name of every Roman Catholic struck off the list. Counsel for the defendants protested; their protest was upheld by Justice Perrin, but overruled by the three other judges. The opening speech by the Attorney General lasted two days. It contained no revelations, nothing, indeed, but what all the world had read in the newspapers. The interest, so intense at the beginning of the trial, speedily evaporated. Judges, jury, and audience all fell asleep. O'Connell himself, who conducted his own defence, spoke listlessly and with less effect than perhaps ever in his whole life. But, none the less, he did not deceive himself as to what would be the

result. He foresaw not only that he would be condemned, but that the sentence would probably be a heavy one. Fearing lest popular indignation would assume the dimensions of a riot he, two days before the conclusion of the trial, published a letter to the Roman Catholic bishops, suggesting, with "profound humility,"

"The propriety of directing the clergy of every parish . . . to take care that not the least particle of anger or irritation should exhibit itself among the Catholic people; to stifle every expression of sorrow or of wrong in the recollection that prudence as well as duty — personal safety, as well as religion — imperatively require that every part of Ireland should remain in the most perfect order and tranquillity, and in the most profound and undisturbed quiet."

On 12th February, the jury, after a little decent delay, returned a verdict of guilty of unlawful and seditious conspiracy. Sentence was postponed till the beginning of next term. In the interval O'Connell, after once more appealing to the people not to allow themselves to be tempted to break the peace, but to act peaceably, quietly, and legally, proceeded to London.

The attack on the Repeal leaders had in Ireland been followed by large accessions to the ranks of the National movement, amongst the most notable being, perhaps, William Smith O'Brien, a scion of the ancient and noble house of Thomond; of whom it was truly said that he advanced slowly, but, having

made up his mind, never took a step backwards — a cold, inflexible, vain man, for whom the stern realities of life eventually proved too hard. In England, too, the manifest unfairness of the trial had operated, if not indeed to swell the ranks of the Repealers to any perceptible degree, at any rate to promote a more friendly feeling towards Ireland, which had taken shape in suggestions for a federal Parliament, holding an occasional session in Dublin. O'Connell, who had always been more or less popular with the Radicals, was warmly welcomed at Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Coventry. A banquet was given to him in Covent Garden theatre, which the Earl of Shrewsbury and Sharman Crawford, forgetting their old feuds with him, honoured by their presence. When he entered the House of Commons he was received with an outburst of applause so spontaneous and hearty as must have conveyed to Peel a painful warning of the dangerous ground on which he was standing. "I am glad," he wrote to Fitzpatrick on 17th February, "I came over; not so much on account of the Parliament as of the English people. I have certainly met with a kindness and a sympathy which I did not expect, but which I will cheerfully cultivate." On the 23rd, without alluding to his own case he spoke at length on the state of Ireland, imploring Parliament to reconsider the relations between the two countries, and by an act of justice to put an end to the constant strife between them.

Judgment was delivered on 30th May. O'Connell had not been mistaken when he anticipated that the

punishment would be a severe one. He was sentenced to be imprisoned for twelve months, to pay a fine of £2,000, and to find security for his good behaviour during the next seven years, himself in £5,000 and two others each in £2,500. The same day he and his fellow-"conspirators" were removed to Richmond Bridewell. Here a pleasant surprise awaited them. Except for the restrictions it necessarily placed on their personal movements, and the limited space it afforded for physical recreation, imprisonment proved far less dreadful than their imagination had depicted it. Comfortable quarters were assigned to them, the attendance of their own servants allowed them, provision made for such as had families living with them, and admission readily granted to all who wished to visit them. From the first day, presents of all sorts — "monster" cakes, fish, venison, game, fruit, and flowers — arrived in boundless profusion. They were overwhelmed with addresses; bored with deputations, till Government put a stop to the nuisance; complimented on their patriotism by American visitors: and, in short, "lionized" in every shape and form. They breakfasted and dined together; the evenings they spent in their own private apartments with their families and more intimate friends. To while away the time they got up private theatricals, started a *Richmond Gazette*, limited to one copy in manuscript, erected a gymnasium, held mock "monsters" on a hillock in the garden, and, in fact, enjoyed themselves as merrily as a parcel of schoolboys let out for play. O'Connell, after the first dread of an insurrection had

passed away, accepted his confinement with equanimity and even with satisfaction.

"There wanted," he said, "but this to my career. I have laboured for Ireland — refused office, honour, and emolument for Ireland. I have prayed and hoped and watched for Ireland. There was one thing wanted: that I should be in jail for Ireland. That has now been added to the rest, thanks to our enemies; and I cordially rejoice at it."

His health, he protested, was excellent, and he took every means within his power to preserve it. "Seven times round the jail garden," he remarked, "is a mile. I walk it three times a day." He proposed to occupy himself in writing his own memoirs, but beyond borrowing a set of the *Annual Register* from the Association Library he made no attempt to carry out his scheme. At dinner-table he played the genial and attentive host very much as if he had been at home at Darrynane. But there can be no doubt of the truth of Daunt's observation, that he fretted under the confinement, and began to age very rapidly.

Meanwhile a strenuous effort was being made to reverse the judgment passed upon him by an appeal to the House of Lords. No less than thirty-four grounds of error were assigned. It was urged that the offence for which he and his companions were tried was not legally charged in the indictment, that the jury was not a lawful jury of the country, the verdict was not a lawful verdict, and the judgment of the court bad in law. People laughed at the

appeal. What chance was there, it was asked, of the House of Lords acting impartially in the matter? Nevertheless, it was the impossible that actually happened. On 4th September the House of Lords, in the person of its law members, decided that the judgment pronounced in Ireland ought to be reversed. It has been urged that the decision, notwithstanding the abstention of the lay Lords was, after all, a party vote. This is no doubt true; but it is equally true that in assenting to the appeal of Lord Wharncliffe, to leave the decision to those of their brethren who were learned in the law, the Lords achieved a victory over their own prejudices deserving the high encomium passed upon it by Montalembert. Besides, there can be no question that Lord Denman's remark, that if such practices as had prevailed in the case were to continue, "trial by jury in Ireland would become a mockery, a delusion, and a snare," was sound law as well as sound sense. On the other hand, Irishmen were justified in complaining that the process of appeal in criminal law resembled the procedure of Rhadamanthus, who punished first and inquired afterwards. The appeal cost the Association £50,000; but it was money well spent.

When the news of their deliverance was communicated to O'Connell and the other prisoners in Richmond jail, so incredible did it seem that, for a moment, it quite stunned them. The revulsion of feeling was intense. Prisoners, gaolers, and friends alike burst into tears. O'Connell, when he recovered his composure, said reverently: "Fitzpatrick, the

hand of man is not in this. It is the response given by Providence to the prayers of the faithful, steadfast, pious people of Ireland." Next day, 7th September, seated on a car of imposing structure, drawn by six white horses, he was borne in triumph to his house in Merrion Square amid the plaudits of the populace. As the procession passed through College Green he pointed significantly to the old Parliament House, and the crowd responded with a burst of applause.

After attending a banquet in honour of the political prisoners, and making a public appearance at the Association, O'Connell repaired to Darrynane. He longed for the bracing air of the mountains, for the peace and quietness which, so long as he remained in Dublin, were denied him; and, above all, he wanted to ponder over the situation and to mature his plans for the future. His journey thither was one long ovation. During his imprisonment, the Federal movement, to which allusion has been made, had been steadily gaining ground in influential Conservative circles as an alternative for Repeal. Several pamphlets had appeared on the subject, and the matter had formally and, indeed with his own approbation, been brought before the Dublin Corporation by Dr. Maunsell, whose connection with the chief organ of Tory opinion in Ireland, the *Evening Mail*, lent special significance to the step. The repeal of the Union he had always and still regarded as a subject on which honest men might differ. For himself, though he could not, as he wrote to Maunsell, accept his Federal resolutions as a substitute for repeal, he

thought it extremely desirable to have the matter thoroughly discussed. "The truth is," he explained to Fitzpatrick, "that a strong Federal display made by and with men hitherto Non-Repealers, would induce the Ministry to strike, and to canvass the terms on which the Irish legislature should be established." Pondering the matter quietly over, at Darrynane, he came to the conclusion that a *via media* could and ought to be found along which Federalists and Repealers might march together. He embodied his thoughts in a long public letter addressed to the Secretary of the Association. They had recently, he argued, won a great, a glorious, and a bloodless victory. It was their duty to use that victory, not to irritate but to conciliate all classes and persuasions of their fellow-countrymen, and, if possible, to procure the entire Irish nation to join in the struggle to obtain the right of Irishmen to legislate for themselves. Hitherto idle jealousies and unfounded fears had prevented such an union. It must be their business to remove these jealousies and fears by assuring their Protestant fellow-countrymen that they, the Catholics, desired no civil or ecclesiastical ascendancy, but only equality. It was perfectly clear — as clear to the Conservative Dr. Maunsell as to himself — that things could not remain as they were. There must be a change of some sort. They had arrived at a time when, if Protestant and Catholic Non-Repealers were to abandon their apathy or opposition and join in the agitation for Repeal, the Union could be repealed without danger, difficulty, tumult, or force; and without in any way disturbing

the rights of property or the enjoyments of social life. This being the case, why should not Repealers and Federalists hit upon some plan for securing the common object they had at heart? For himself, he disclaimed every species of infallibility, and would yield, for the sake of co-operation, everything but principle. He would follow in the track of any man who sought for the restoration to Ireland of the right of legislation. As to the powers to be entrusted to the Irish Parliament, the "simple Repealers" were of opinion that it should have precisely the same power and authority which the former Irish Parliament had. The Federalists had not suggested any definite scheme; but, as far as he could gather, they required more for Ireland than the simple Repealers did; for, besides the local Parliament in Ireland, having full and perfect local authority, they required that there should be for questions of Imperial concern, colonial, military, naval, and of foreign alliance and policy a congressional or federative Parliament, in which Ireland should have her fair share and proportion of representation and power. In this respect he confessed he felt a preference for the Federative plan, as tending more to the utility of Ireland, and to the maintenance of the connection with England than the mode of simple Repeal. At the same time, it was obvious that he could not consent to commit himself in the matter till some definite scheme had been submitted to him by the Federalists.

This letter, which will strike every careful reader of it as a candid and statesmanlike exposition of the

subject, spread consternation in the ranks of the Young Ireland party. What better proof, they asked, could be wanted of the incapacity of their leader to lead than was afforded by his determination to abandon Repeal in favour of Federation? It is true the letter said nothing about abandoning Repeal, but they were convinced, all the same, that this was O'Connell's meaning. What was Federation but a stepping-stone to Whiggism? It was time to sound the alarm — high time to put a stop to this shilly-shallying on the part of their leader. They had never forgiven him for what they called his "retreat" at Clontarf; they were beside themselves with rage at this fresh exhibition of his moderation The loaf, the whole loaf, or no bread, they shouted. It is easier to understand their position than to approve of it. O'Connell had expressed his belief that Federalism would tend to draw England and Ireland closer together. This was the stone of stumbling. This was exactly what they did not want. What they wanted was separation — "a foreign policy for Ireland." But they lacked the courage to speak out their meaning. At best, they were but weak imitations of Tone. No one was more surprised at the reception accorded his letter than the author of it. He protested that it would have been better to have read it than to have criticised it unread. But the mischief was done. Their shouts had frightened the Federalists, and, after vainly trying to repair their blunder, O'Connell withdrew his offer.

Meanwhile Peel, having failed to put down the

agitation by prosecuting the leaders of it, was endeavouring, in more legitimate and statesman-like fashion, to sap the strength of the National movement by measures of legislative redress. In November, 1843, he had caused a commission to issue, known from its chairman, Lord Devon, as the Devon Commission,

"To inquire into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland, and in respect also to the burdens of county cess and other charges which fall respectively on the landlord and occupying tenant; and to report as to the amendments, if any, of the existing laws, which, having due regard to the just rights of property, may be calculated to encourage the cultivation of the soil, to extend a better system of agriculture, and to improve the relation between landlord and tenant in that part of the United Kingdom."

The Committee reported on 14th February, 1845, and the preparation of a Bill embodying some, at least, of its suggestions, was entrusted to Stanley. At the same time proposals were submitted to Parliament for increasing and making permanent the annual grant to the Catholic Seminary at Maynooth, and for founding a system of middle-class education by the establishment of secular colleges at Cork, Belfast, and Galway. O'Connell strongly favoured the programme of Government, so far as it related to Maynooth; but believing, as he said, that "religion ought to be the basis of education," he went over to England, in June, for the express purpose of opposing the establishment of the provincial colleges.

THE NAUGHTY BOY.

FROM A PRINT IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

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Speaking on the 23rd, he said, "Let there be Presbyterianism for the Presbyterian, Protestantism for the Protestant, and Catholicism for the Catholic. I want nothing for the Catholic which I am not ready to assert for others. Let there be fair play and justice to all." His opposition was unavailing; the three secular colleges were established; but, as he predicted, the Catholics, after a brief trial of them, withdrew from them under instructions from the Propaganda. Of the third measure, Stanley's Land Bill, it is only necessary to say that while its provisions fell far short of O'Connell's demand for "fixity of tenure," and "absolute right of recompense for all substantial improvements" on the part of the tenant, it encountered such opposition in the Lords as led to its being withdrawn.

O'Connell's criticism of the Bill drew down upon him the vengeance of the *Times*. He had insisted that Government ought to meet the landlords boldly and force them to do their duty. The *Times* replied by sending a commissioner down to Darrynane to investigate the state of his property. The result of the inquiry was, as might have been expected, not favourable to O'Connell. His tenants were reported to be immersed in the most squalid indigence; Cahirciveen was depicted as a congregation of wretchedness, its dirty and unpaved streets, and old hat-mended windows, testifying to the neglect in which it was held by its proprietor; and he himself charged with remorselessly evicting his tenantry and by imputation with being a participator in the very clearance system he had condemned. The report

was a tissue of exaggerations and falsehoods from beginning to end. The very wantonness of the charges preferred against him defeated the object for which they were brought, and raised up many friends for him in unexpected quarters. "The management of O'Connell's property," wrote the Tory *Evening Mail*, "is excellent, and his tenants are comfortable and happy." But though he had little difficulty in rebutting the accusation, the conduct of the *Times* irritated him and, added to his other troubles, told seriously on his health.

Meanwhile, the shadow of the Great Famine was stealing slowly but perceptibly over the land. Early in October it was known that the potato crop, on which almost one-third of the population depended for their existence, had rotted in the ground. Over the whole length and breadth of the land there was hardly a sound field of potatoes to be seen: everywhere nothing but a mass of decaying, stinking vegetable matter. Fortunately the cereal crop was above the average, and there was every prospect, if Government interposed with an embargo on the exportation of grain, that the calamity with which the nation was menaced might be partially averted. Warnings reached Government from all quarters. O'Connell himself was the first to sound the alarm. Speaking at a public meeting on 28th October, he insisted on the necessity of closing the ports without delay, of taking measures to prevent the precious grain being misused for purposes of distillation and brewing, and of importing rice from the Carolinas and Indian corn from America. To pay

for the extra supplies, he suggested a tax of fifty per cent. on the rentals of all absentee landlords, and ten per cent. on all resident ones. For himself, he at once began to lay up large stores of rice at Darrynane for the benefit of his tenants. Together with the Duke of Leinster, Lord Cloncurry, and the Mayor of Dublin he waited on the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Heytesbury, with the object of impressing upon Government the serious nature of the situation. They were answered that specialists were being sent over from England to investigate the nature of the disease! Meanwhile, the grain was leaving the country in larger quantities than usual. According to the *Mark Lane Express* sixteen thousand quarters of corn were exported in a single week. The moral of the situation was pointed out in words of burning indignation by the *Nation*—

"Heaven, that tempers ill with good, when it smote our wonted food,
Sent us bounteous growth of grain — sent to pauper slaves in vain!
We but asked in deadly need, 'Ye that rule us, let us feed
On the food that 's ours'; behold! — adder-deaf and icy cold!
Were we saints of Heaven! were we — how we burn to think it — FREE!
Not a grain should leave our shore, not for England's golden store.
They who hunger where it grew: they whom Heaven has sent it to,
They who reared with sweat of brow — they, or none should have it now."

A duke of the blood royal remarked: "I understand that rotten potatoes and sea-weed, or even grass properly mixed, afford a very wholesome and nutritious food. We all know that Irishmen can live upon anything, and there is plenty of grass in the fields, even if the potato crop should fail." It was difficult, under the circumstances, to keep one's temper. As usual, hard in the wake of famine and pestilence came agrarian outrage. Once more the country was threatened with coercion. Peel was reminded by the *Morning Herald* that the railways recently constructed had brought every part of Ireland within six hours of the central garrison. The *Nation* retorted that railways could be destroyed, and that Hofer and his Tyroleans could hardly have desired a deadlier ambush than was afforded by the brink of a deep cutting upon a railway. The provocation was very great; but such language only served to make matters worse, and O'Connell at once protested against it.

Bad as things were when Parliament met on 22nd January, 1846, there was still time to alleviate the misery of the nation. On 17th February O'Connell rose to call attention to the state of famine and disease in Ireland, and to ask for a committee of the whole House to devise means to relieve the distress of the Irish people. He was answered by expressions of good-will and sympathy; but the measures he suggested as necessary to preserve Ireland from the horrors of famine and pestilence were too bold for the timidity of the ministry and the inclination of the House. Once again, instead of the bread he

asked for, he was offered a stone — instead of a fish, a scorpion. On 30th March a Coercion Bill of extreme severity was, after having passed the Lords, submitted for the approval of the House of Commons. O'Connell offered it all the opposition in his power. He spoke temperately and persuasively. He did not, he said, deny the existence of outrages in certain parts of Ireland. But he begged the House to look deeper, and to remove the causes of those outrages. In the county of Tipperary there was an agrarian law, which was the law of ejectment; in the province of Ulster there was a general law, giving the tenant valuable rights. The remedy he asked for was that the tenant right of Ulster should be generally adopted throughout Ireland. He wanted the House to grant a strong, bold, manly, useful, remedial measure. The only coercion act required was one to compel the landlords who would not do their duty — to compel them to prevent the people dying of hunger. Help came to him from an unexpected quarter. In June the Bill was defeated by a combination of Whigs, Radicals, and discontented Protectionists. Peel seized the opportunity to retire from office, and in July he was succeeded by Lord John Russell.

The appointment of Lord Duncannon, now Earl of Bessborough, with whom he had long been on terms of familiar intercourse, as Lord Lieutenant gratified O'Connell and, believing that the accession of the Whigs to power would be followed by remedial measures for the social grievances under which Ireland was groaning, he entered into a cordial alli-

ance with them. His policy was disapproved of by the Young Ireland party. They had boasted so long of having prevented him retreating on Federalism that they thought they could prevent what they regarded as a more disgraceful retreat on Whiggism. But this time they reckoned without their host. The situation was too serious for such trifling. O'Connell not only refused to give way, but insisted on a public renunciation of their hypothetical physical force notions. Rather than yield on this point, they seceded in a body from Conciliation Hall. Their secession was an act of treason, not only against their leader but against their country, more disastrous in its effects than any amount of agrarian outrages on the part of ignorant Tipperary peasants. Their conduct mortified and wounded O'Connell. It was his death-blow. From that day the disease from which he was suffering made rapid strides. His friends were alarmed to see how suddenly old and haggard he had grown. In the autumn he retired to Darrynane to visit, as it proved for the last time, those scenes once so full of life and joy to him, now desolate and dreary beyond description. The recurrence of the potato famine, intensified this time by a cereal harvest below the average, filled his cup of wretchedness to overflowing. But, feeble and emaciated though he was in body, his mind was still clear. "My dear Friend," he wrote to Fitzpatrick on 5th October: "It would be the absurdest of all absurd things to think of a tribute in such times as these. They are, indeed, more awful than you have any notion of. All our thoughts are engrossed with

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

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two topics—endeavouring to keep the people from outbreaks and endeavouring to get food for them. I tell you danger is in our path. May the great God, in His infinite mercy, mitigate the calamity and avert the danger!"

In December he went up to Dublin to assist at the formation of a central board of Irish landlords, "in which religious differences would never be heard of," for providing means to alleviate the general distress. The attitude of the Young Ireland party, and particularly of Smith O'Brien, caused him infinite distress, but his efforts at reconciliation proved useless, and so, seeing his country once more drifting into rebellion, he quitted Ireland on 22d January, 1847, for the last time. On 8th February he appeared in the House of Commons—the mere shadow of his former self. He had come to plead for the last time for Ireland. She was in their hands—in their power. If they did not save her she could not save herself. If they did not come to her help he solemnly called on them to recollect that he predicted with the sincerest conviction that one-fourth of her population would perish. He was heard with difficulty; the voice once so resonant had sunk almost to a whisper. He struggled to exert himself. "There never was a period," he wrote on 13th February, "when more energy was necessary for the public safety, nor were ever the prospects more dark and dismal .... How different would the scene be if we had our own parliament, taking care of our own people!"

But, even while he wrote, the hand of death was upon him. His physicians spoke hopefully, and

recommended a change of scene and air. But he did not deceive himself: he knew he was dying. His physical weakness increased daily; but his mind was perfectly clear, though torpid. He found infinite consolation in the spiritual ministrations of his friend the Rev. Dr. Miley, whom the kindness of Archbishop Murray allowed to attend on him. Occasionally a faint smile stole over his face when some incident of happier days was recalled to him. "But generally," wrote Dr. Miley, "he is solemn, collected, and given to ejaculatory prayer—the autotype, you would figure to yourself, of one of the ancient patriarchs of whom it is written 'They walked before God, and were perfect.'" On 1st March he sent his last instructions to his faithful friend—"the best of all his friends," he called him—Fitzpatrick. Then a great torpor fell upon him: he assented listlessly to the arrangements made for his removal. Before proceeding abroad he spent a little time at Hastings, where he was visited by the Earl of Shrewsbury—all his old animosities forgotten. On St. Patrick's Day several bunches of shamrock reached him from Ireland—one from a member of the Beresford family. The attention touched him. On 22d March he crossed over from Folkestone to Boulogne, attended by his youngest son Daniel, Dr. Miley and his valet, Dugan. The journey through France was slow and painful. At Paris, among those who called to show their respect for him were Montalembert and de Berryer. Everywhere the profoundest reverence was paid him. At Lyons, which was reached on 11th April, it was snowing as heavily, Dr. Miley

wrote, as you ever saw it in Dublin on a Christmas Eve. His listlessness grew upon him, and his utter indifference about reaching Rome irritated Dr. Miley. It was the 6th May before he reached Genoa. His end was drawing perceptibly nearer. Shortly after two o'clock on Saturday morning, the 15th, while it was still dark, the Cardinal Archbishop—himself eighty-eight years old—was summoned to administer the last rites of the Catholic Church to him. "All Genoa was praying for him." About half past nine on the same day he passed quietly away, "with the calm of an infant that falls off to sleep." His heart according to his request was embalmed, and, being placed in a silver urn, was carried to Rome, where it was received by Pius IX. and placed with imposing solemnity in the church of St. Agatha. His body was brought back to Ireland on 5th August, and interred in Glasnevin cemetery. In 1869 a round-tower 165 feet high was erected to his memory and his body removed to a crypt at its base.

O'Connell's death removed from the political stage one of the most eminent characters of the century. For nearly forty years he had been prominently before the public, and during those forty years there had scarcely been a political meeting of any importance in Ireland at which he had not been the chief speaker. In the three kingdoms there was hardly a person to whom he was not familiar, either personally or through the well-known caricatures of H. B. Slightly under six feet, and broad in proportion, with features which the wonderful charm of his mouth redeemed from coarseness, and a voice at once sweet

and sonorous, he seemed to have been specially framed by nature for the part he played of agitator. And this man, who could move millions with his eloquence, who held the fate of Ireland in his grasp for at least a quarter of a century, who at any moment during that time could, by a single word, have caused a revolution, the consequence of which it is impossible to forecast — what sort of man was he? What was the secret of the power he wielded? What was the lesson his life has to teach us?

The scion of an ancient family, of whose traditions he was perhaps a little inordinately vain, he was in reality a very simple, homely person. Unpretentious in all that concerned himself, he showed himself to men exactly as he was. His faults were as patent as his good qualities. His life was an open book, which all men might read—a book in which, while there was much to blame, there was much more to commend, and a book which men interpreted generously or illiberally as their own natures were generous or illiberal. Seldom till, in his declining days, knowing what it was to be ill, he rejoiced like a healthy schoolboy in the exercise of his physical powers. To follow his beagles on foot in the dewy freshness of the morning, when the sun was shooting its earliest rays over the Atlantic, was to him the supremest pleasure in life. Loving nature in all her changing moods, he was never so entirely happy as when at Darrynane. Learned he was not, so far as book-lore went. Indeed, outside legal literature, of which he possessed a competent knowledge, he was

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neither widely nor deeply read. Even of the history of his own country he was, till he made a special study of it for his Repeal agitation, but vaguely and inaccurately informed. His one attempt at writing it—*A Memoir on Ireland, Native and Saxon*—is a mediocre production. He liked poetry; but his taste was neither refined nor discriminative. Dickens, he considered, for obvious reasons, the greatest novelist; and he followed the story of little Nell as it appeared week by week, with the intensest interest. Though speaking Irish himself, he had no sympathy with those who wished to preserve the language either to national or philological ends. *The Annals of the Four Masters* he despised as a wearisome record of uninteresting facts. For the rest, the Tower of Babel had, in his opinion, worked enough mischief, and English was sufficient for all practical purposes. He spoke French tolerably; but when approached to advocate the cause of the "Lyons conspirators," in 1835, he declined on the ground of "sheer incapacity to perform that duty efficiently in the French language." His early training had given him a bent towards theological discussion, which his agitation of the Catholic claims developed, and he more than once posed on public platforms as the champion of his creed. But he was only superficially versed in ecclesiastical history, and his points were rather those of an acute lawyer than of a candid critic. Himself a Roman Catholic from conviction as well as education, though his creed hardly perhaps in all respects conformed to the canons of strict orthodoxy, he was entirely tolerant of every

form of Christian belief. In truth, he was a man of deep religious feeling, who in all the relations of life carried about with him a profound consciousness of the divine presence. Possessing a broad sense of humour, which rendered him impatient of the artificial restraints of society, he took an almost wanton pleasure in the use of language which, if it sometimes served the cause of truth, more often than not only succeeded in wounding people's susceptibilities and rendering himself disliked. To Jeremy Bentham's remonstrances in this particular he urged that it was right to speak of one's friends and enemies in the strongest language consistent with truth. But it is difficult to see what truth there was in calling Peel a "scented fop," Sir Henry Hardinge a "one-armed miscreant," and the Duke of Wellington a "stunted corporal." The habit grew upon him in ordinary conversation, till such words as "rogue," "villain," "scoundrel," at last lost all precise significance for him. Fortunately his language, if it was only too often abusive, was never feebly malicious. Anger and indignation he reserved for public questions and public men; and if he was accustomed to hit hard he never complained when attacked in return, while his boundless good humour and inexhaustible store of mother-wit often enabled him to parry the weapons of his adversaries and turn the laugh against them. Admirable in all the relations of his private life—of husband, father, friend, and master—he was adored by all who knew him intimately. His manner might be lacking in refinement, his language coarse; but the man himself was

entirely lovable. His transparent honesty won the confidence of all who came into contact with him.

Herein lay the secret of his power. No one who knew him ever doubted his integrity. His enemies sneered at his patriotism, and caricatured him as battening on the poverty of the nation he deluded; but his countrymen believed in him, and he never did anything to forfeit their confidence. But, if his integrity was the main cause of the influence he wielded, hardly less important in maintaining it was his sensitiveness to public opinion, and the dexterity with which he was able to extricate himself from any awkward position into which his sometimes too-precipitate judgment drove him. Unbending in anything affecting principle, he knew the value of yielding on matters open to discussion, and the frankness with which he admitted his error, while it conciliated public opinion, served to strengthen his claim as leader. But neither personal integrity nor political dexterity would have raised him to the position he held had not the condition of things been propitious to him. No man, however well qualified to play the part of agitator, can of himself call an agitation into existence. And if O'Connell's power in Ireland was such as, in the opinion of impartial observers, to menace government and by his own admission such as no man ought to possess, it was so only because he embodied in his own person the grievances and aspirations of the great majority of his fellow-countrymen. He was strong because through him the demands of a nation struggling for freedom found articulate expression.

And this nation, of which he was the representative, is it too much to say that he was also the creator of it? If the Ireland of the middle of the century was a very different country than the Ireland of the first two decades, to what cause, if not to O'Connell, was the change due? When he first appeared before the public to agitate the claims of his fellow Catholics, the bulk of his countrymen were steeped in ignorance and apathy. For long years his voice was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Indifference, worse even than open hostility, met him on every hand. But the seed he had been sowing had not all of it fallen into barren soil. Suddenly, and almost without warning, came the awakening. From a nation of slaves Irishmen became, if not, indeed, at once a nation of freemen, at any rate a nation in whom the feeling of a longing for freedom had been revived. Men who had hitherto hardly dared to count their souls their own ceased to cringe beneath the frown of their hereditary tyrant, and, preferring starvation and death to slavery, asserted their rights as human beings. The hatred with which from this moment O'Connell was regarded, the abuse lavished upon him, was significant of the terror which he had awakened in the breasts of those whose privileges he had invaded and whose dominion he had curtailed. Nor was the revolution he had effected any the less profound or lasting because it had been accomplished without bloodshed and by the power of opinion alone. To those, indeed, of a younger generation, it only appeared too natural, and knowing nothing of the obstacles that

had been overcome, they underestimated the victory that had been won. In the impatience of their ardour to rescue their country from the yoke of the oppressor, it seemed to them as if nothing had been done. When O'Connell preached moderation and the efficacy of constitutional agitation they laughed him to scorn, and poured ridicule on his doctrine, that no political change was worth the shedding of one drop of blood. But Wisdom is justified of her children. England has never yielded one iota to terrorism, and if concession after concession has marked the progress of the fifty years that have elapsed since O'Connell's death, it is not to the advocates of physical force, but to those who, in season and out of season, have preached and practised O'Connell's doctrine of constitutional agitation, that the thanks are due. It is easy for the arm-chair politician to preach patience; it is not so easy for those who have suffered grievous personal wrong to practise it. The abuse of power has only too often in Ireland furnished an excuse for outrage and violence. No one knew this better than O'Connell; yet no one preached patience under suffering more resolutely than he did. He knew exactly where the shoe pinched. Not by acts of Parliament *per se*, not by cutting the connection with England, not by turning all things topsy-turvy in the hope of a miracle; but by cherishing the constitution, by cleansing administration of its abuses, by peaceful legal agitation, was the goal of freedom to be reached. Beside the rosy vision of a free and independent republic, strong in its own resources, and flourishing in arts and arms,

as it floated before the imagination of Young Ireland, his simple ideal of a well-governed state, under the ægis of Great Britain, showed pale and colourless. But at least it had this merit, that it was capable of realisation.

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